

Ethnic Conflict: A threat to Ghana's Internal Stability

A Case Study of the Nkonya-Alavanyo Conflict in the Volta Region

By

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Thesis submitted in Fulfilment of the Requirement for Master of
Philosophy in Peace and Conflict Studies, Department of Political
Science.

Faculty of Social Studies

UNIVERSITETET I OSLO

December 2014

Dedication

This work is dedicated to my parents and siblings for their support and encouragement throughout my entire education.

Acknowledgement

Thanks to Almighty God for His guidance and protection throughout the duration of the course. My supervisor Professor Stein Sundstøl Eriksen of the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI) deserves special thanks for donating his time, direction, constructive criticism and suggestions during the writing process of this thesis. My appreciation is also directed respectively towards the coordinator, executive officers and the secretary of the Peace and Conflict studies programme for their kind hospitality.

I owe much appreciation to Justice Mensah, a research assistant at the University of Ghana, Legon, who devoted his time willingly to help me access the necessary materials and the respondents for the fieldwork during the data collection stage. Without their assistance, this study might have been abandoned. Special thanks also go to opinion leaders of the two communities from which the data was collected for their invaluable assistance. I also thank my friends and loved ones for their encouragement during the course of my study. Great thanks to all my fellow course students who helped me, in one way or another, during my successful stay in Norway.

Abstract

This study analyses the threat to Ghana's peace and stability as a result of ethnic conflict, using the Nkonya-Alavanyo conflict as a case study. The study examines why the conflict has persisted for decades despite numerous intentions for resolution, and the effect of the conflict on the communities involved. Findings from the study indicate that central to the Nkonya-Alavanyo conflict is a parcel of land that has been in dispute for decades. The land has served as a source of conflict as a result of its economic values. Moreover, the constant reoccurrence of the conflict is a consequence of the land being regarded as a traditional heritage that needs to be protected and secured, regardless of the effect. The consequences of the Nkonya-Alavanyo conflict since it first broke have been devastating; affecting the socio-economic and psychological aspects of the lives of people living in these communities and placing them in a perpetual state of insecurity. The result of the case study indicates that the constant reoccurrence of ethnic conflicts poses a threat to the peace and stability of Ghana. Finally, some recommendations are suggested based on the findings.

Abbreviations

APA	American Psychological Association
CDD	Center for Democratic Development
DFID	Department for International Development
EIU	Economic Intelligence Unit
GPI	Global Peace Index
NDC	National Democratic Congress
NPP	New Patriotic Party
PNDC	Provisional National Defence Council
UNEP	United Nations Environmental Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

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Chapter One

Introduction

The African continent is characterized by constant degenerating socio-economic conditions and escalating political instability. This is due to the varied and fluid nature and degree of conflicts that are evident in most countries across Africa. For example, South Sudan is currently experiencing some level of political instability; Nigeria and the activities of Boko Haram have claimed lives and damaged properties; and Mali, which has been politically unstable for the last four years. Most conflicts witnessed in Africa began as internal strife between members or groups of local communities and gradually gathered momentum and spilled over the communal boundaries to become international issues. The causes of conflicts in Africa have been traced to historical, racial, socio-economic, land settlement and religious conditions. Additionally, ethnic pride or ethnicity has also played a dominant role. A vivid example of conflict linked to ethnicity and race is that between the Tuareg, who are Berbers, and the sub-Saharan blacks, who are Africans. This conflict has existed since the days of slavery.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

The most common types of conflicts in Ghana are so-called “Chieftaincy Conflicts” and “Land Conflicts”, which focus on the chieftaincy institution as well as the rightful landowners within communities. These types of conflict usually lead to intra-ethnic or inter-ethnic conflicts. Most often, land conflicts are the result of two ethnic groups disagreeing on the rightful owner of a parcel of land. This disagreement serves as a catalyst that fuels inter-ethnic conflicts. An example of such a conflict in Ghana is the Nkonya-Alavanyo conflict. Intra-ethnic conflicts usually emerge as a result of people within the same ethnic group disagreeing on who has the right to be “enstooled” or “unskinned” as a chief. This type of conflict is also known as chieftaincy conflict; a clear example of which is the Dagbon Conflict. This is a conflict between the two royal gates of the Dagbon people over the succession of the “Ya Na” (the Dagbon overlord or chief). In general, Ghana has been a relatively peaceful and stable country; however,

the country has had its fair share of uprisings leading to violent clashes, which have resulted in war, loss of life and property, in addition to high government and local assembly expenditures. The Nkonya-Alavanyo conflict is an ethnic conflict resulting from some disagreements between the Alavanyo ethnic group and the Nkonya ethnic group over the rightful owner of a parcel of land.

This study identifies and analyses the complex nature, causes, processes of escalation and dynamics of violent confrontations over land issues among the Alavanyo and Nkonya communities. Moreover, the study will describe and analyze in detail how the contention between the people of Alavanyo and the people of Nkonya threatens Ghana's peace and political stability, as well as its economic development.

1.2 Background and Relevance of the Study

Over the years, Ghana been considered a peaceful nation amid an otherwise unstable sub-region. According to the Institute for Economics and Peace (2014), the 2008 Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) report on Global Peace Index (GPI), Ghana was ranked the most peaceful nation on the African continent. Evidently, unlike a majority of its neighbors, Ghana has enjoyed reasonable political stability nationally, and has not encountered persistent civil wars or violent conflicts on a national scale; unlike in neighboring countries. Despite this relative peace and stability, the country has had to address a variety of tribal, ethnic and land conflicts that have arisen within various communities and settlements, many of which have culminated in violent clashes, leading to damage to lives and properties (Bogner, 2000; Tsikata & Seini, 2004). The occasional eruption of conflicts in Ghana have become a major concern to the government and good people of Ghana, which is evident in the constant search for long-lasting and amicable conflict resolution (example, Otite, 2000; Bombade, 2007; Tonah, 2007). Tsikata and Semi (2004) reports that 54% of respondents to a survey conducted by the Centre for Democratic Development (CDD, Ghana) in 2003 stated that violent conflicts between different groups in the country occurred "sometimes", "often" or "always".

Every community in Ghana has suffered violent conflict relating to ethnic disputes, political tension and conflict that occurs between supporters of different political parties, religious clashes between the different groups, and violence resulting from industrial disputes. However, the type

of conflict that has caused devastating harm to lives and properties over the years is ethnic conflict, which is usually the end result of traditional power succession and allegiance failures, in addition to misunderstandings about land settlement.

In the CDD-Ghana study referred to earlier, which is cited in (Tsikata & Seini, 2004; 5), “16 percent of respondents indicated boundary or land disputes, 13 percent traditional leadership disputes and 10 percent political rivalries, leadership contests and exclusion as the first most common cause of violent conflicts”. There have been two broad categorizations of conflicts in Ghana: inter-ethnic, involving mainly conflicts over land or geographical boundaries; and intra-ethnic, concerned mainly with disputes over traditional power successions, and religious and political disagreements between factions within the same religion or political party respectively.

The chieftaincy institution in Ghana has been cardinal to numerous types of community conflicts, especially those linked to ethnicity and succession to traditional political authority. This causal agent of conflict is believed to be a result of the keen support and interest in the chieftaincy institution since the late 1980s. Surprisingly, political scientists in Ghana are sharply disserved by individuals who posit chieftaincy as critical in resolving problems within communities (Boafo-Arthur, 2003), and individuals who maintain that the country as a whole should banish the institution since it does not help solve any issues (Ninsin, 1995). It is interesting to note the findings of CDD-Ghana (2003) studies indicated that, “30 percent of respondents mentioned chiefs’ courts as the conflict resolution forum of choice while another 30 percent preferred the armed forces or police. For second resort for conflict resolution, 33 percent mentioned chiefs, 17 percent the armed forces and police, 11 percent the District Chief Executive and 7 percent religious leaders” (Tsikata & Seini, 2004; 5). “As the survey analysis remarks, only 2 percent mentioned the courts as forum of first resort, a further 8 percent would consider it as forum of second resort” (Tsikata & Seini, 2004; 5).

Land ownership and control has been another major aspect of conflicts in Ghana. There is a general consensus that Ghana’s land tenure system and its governance are fraught with major challenges that aggravate insecurity in relation to land tenure, as well as having a damaging effect on Ghana’s development. Issues that have worsened the land tenure system and made it more insecure, thus causing conflicts, include widespread “indiscipline in the underdeveloped and uncertain land markets, indeterminate boundaries of customarily-held lands, a weak land

administration system, the problematic articulation of statutory and customary land tenure systems, and confusion over the status of derived interests and customary tenancies” (Tsikata & Seini, 2004; 6). The aforementioned problems have been observed in all land conflicts in Ghana; ranging from the constant call by dissatisfied youth groups that their opinions must be heard in decisions pertaining to land sales in Accra and the appropriation of its proceeds, to the chaotic aggression in urban land ownerships resulting from the sale of a piece of land to various individuals, as well as the constant calls by chiefs for better royalties and the desire to have full control of mineral and natural resources, such as bauxite, gold and timber. Land ownership has been the primary cause of many inter-ethnic conflicts; a critical example of which is the Nkonya-Alavanyo conflict, where ethnic diversity in the region is regarded implicitly as a factor of imminent tension.

The most striking ethnic conflicts in Ghana that have occasionally caused damage to lives and property and existed across decades include the established Konkomba and the Nanumbas/Dagombas, the unending chieftaincy dispute of Dagbon and the Chieftaincy conflict in Bawku in the northern belt of Ghana. The southern belt of the country has also witnessed the Anlo chieftaincy conflict, the Akropong-Akwapem land conflict, the protracted conflict between the Tsitos and Pekis and the long-standing land conflict between Nkonyas and Alavanyos (Tsikata & Seini, 2004; Tonah, 2007; Bombade, 2007). The ongoing status of the latter is leading to a state of emergency being declared and the government imposing a state order of curfew on the inhabitants of both communities. As noted, these conflicts orbit around “open-ended claims that entail continuing negotiations and maneuver” (Berry, 1993 cited in Fred-Mensah, 1999; 952).

1.3 The Nkonya-Alavanyo Conflict

According to Midodzi and Jaha (2011), the evolution of the conflict between the Alavanyo and Nkonya communities began around 1923. It has been established that the root cause of this conflict, that has lasted more than nine decades, was a land demarcation process that culminated in the Gruner map being drawn up in 1913 by the colonial German administration. In reality, the land under dispute passes through both Nkonya and Alavanyo. According to Ohene (2013), history establishes that the Alavanyo community migrated from Saviefe to Sovie, and settled on

land that was given to them by the Nkonya community in 1840. Following their settlement, the Alavanyo formed a number of communities on agricultural land owned initially by the Nkonya community. The land in disagreement is a forest rich in timber, bamboo and cola nuts, and has also proven fertile for the cultivation of cocoa and other food crops. Between the 1923 and 1958, the Nkonya and Alavanyo clashed over the land in question until a Supreme Court ruling in 1958 favored the Nkonya community. This triggered increased discontentment among the Alavanyo community, with the conflict taking a further angle when the Alavanyo disputed the accuracy and legitimacy of the 1913 Gruner map.

Since its inception, there have been occasional incidents of violence over the disputed land. However, the late 1990s leading to the 2000s and more recently since 2013 have seen numerous heightened violent clashes between the Nkonyans and Alavanyos, resulting in significant loss of lives and property. Usually, the clashes are sparked by just one incident of shooting before escalating and leading to counter-accusations made by both communities that the other is the cause of the violence. The sudden recurrences of this ensuing dispute are attributable to the economic values, population increase and cultural heritage or historical bonds that the people of Nkonya hold towards the land.

In 2003, for example, each of the communities pointed an accusing finger at the other for engaging in farming activities as well as logging of timber in the disputed forest. This triggered attacks and counter-attacks on the inhabitants of these communities. In early 2003, some newspapers in Ghana reported the shooting of an Nkonya man and his child on their farmland, leading to the death of the man (Ghanaian Times, 01/03/03; Evening News, 03/03/03). The Evening News (03/03/03) further reported that the murder of the man on his farmland led to marauding and stealing of farmlands, setting ablaze farmlands and food bans. The Ghanaian Times (12/06/2003) reported that one Alavanyo man was murdered as a result of this conflict. The Chronicle newspaper alleged in 2003 that, Alavanyo people mounted a barricade in their town and inspected cars that were travelling from Nkonya to Hohoe with the aim of assailing the Nkonya people on board the bus (04/11/2003).

Despite the periodic occurrences of ethnic clashes in the country, there seems to be no effective way of managing or resolving these long-standing conflicts. Numerous local and government interventions have been made in an attempt to address these conflicts, but to no avail, as

“anything” can reignite the feud. The inability to find a permanent solution drives many to wonder about the extent of damage the conflicts have caused the nation; why it has been difficult to find everlasting solutions; and what factors account for the entrenched position taken by the communities engaged in these conflicts, making reconciliation a mirage. It is these nagging questions, among others, that will drive this study.

This study will bring to light the real issues igniting new and already existing conflicts, why most of previous settlement negotiations have failed and proposed more efficient and proactive ways to resolve and deal with these conflicts. The findings of this study will also broaden the knowledge base of conflicts and its consequences, as well as provide a new sense of direction to policy makers on how to resolve and deal with conflicts efficiently and proactively.

1.4 Objectives and Aims of the Study

The focus of this study is on how conflicts affect the peace, stability, as well as the socio-economic lives of people, communities and Ghana as a whole. The thrust of the study is to determine the violent ethnic clashes beneath the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict, and how these affect the development and progress of the Alavanyo community as well as the Nkonya community and the country as a whole. Moreover, it will make appropriate recommendations to policy makers and indigenes for the way forward to reaching a lasting peaceful co-existence for the Alavanyos and Nkonyas. The study aims to examine:

- Why this conflict has persisted for decades despite numerous interventions for resolution.
- The impact of this conflict on the development and forward march of the local communities involved.

1.5 Research Questions

Following from the above introduction, objectives and its relevance, the following questions are investigated:

- What factors trigger the conflict in contemporary times?
- How does this conflict threaten and impact on Ghana’s internal stability.

- To what extent does this conflict impact on the socio-economic activities of the local people, as well as the communities involved?

1.6 Structure of the Thesis

For the purpose of analysis and easy comprehension of issues, this study will be divided into five chapters. Each chapter will deal with a series of relevant themes.

Chapter one provides an introduction to the study. It presents information on the statement of the problem and the background, as well as justification for the research problem. The chapter also outlines the objectives of the study, research questions and structure of the thesis.

Chapter two considers the theoretical themes relevant to the study and other literature reviews. This chapter focuses on the theories on which this study was based.

Chapter three considers the methodological discussion of the study. It discusses and justifies the choice of methodology employed and describes the sources of data, data collection techniques, methods of data presentation and analysis, and finally outlines the challenges encountered in the field.

Chapter 4 focuses on the findings yielded from the empirical data. It discusses the demographics of the respondents and the effect of the conflict on issues, such as security, economic activities and social activities among others.

Chapter five discusses the research findings in relation to the literature and presents various suggestions as to how the conflict can be resolved or managed successfully. The chapter also draws conclusions from the study.

Chapter Two

Theoretical Framework and Literature Review

For all empirical researches, theoretical grounding and review of existing literatures are required. This serves as a means by which to exploit fully the implicit as well as explicit premises beneath the study and also help explain behavior. The nature of ethnic conflicts in Ghana and possible causes for violent conflicts among ethnic groups allow for the application of a variety of theories to explain comprehensively and enhance understanding of the diverse events that necessitate them. This section is divided into two parts: the first deals with theories that explain ethnic conflicts; and the second reviews existing literature on the impact of ethnic conflicts. The literature review presents a theoretical perspective of ethnic conflict. Among the several theories explaining ethnic conflicts, this research focuses on just two that are relevant to the situation in Ghana. The first is the Symbolic Politics Theory, which explains and predicts ethnic conflicts; and the second is the Instrumentalist Theory, which focuses on social, political and economic events that predict ethnic conflicts.

2.1 The Standpoint of Symbolic Politics Theory

This theory posits that the justification for ethnic conflict or war is a result of people's response and acceptance of ethnic traditional/myth-symbols that provide adequate and reasonable grounds for aggression towards another group (Kaufman, 2001). These symbolic myths provide grounds for antagonism if they can demonstrate that the other group is a traditional enemy. This is also the case if they are linked to a group's assets, such as a territory that requires defence, protection and domination (the notion of dominance is a result of chauvinism; an activity indicative of belief in the superiority of one ethnic group over the other). Critical to this theory is ethnic fear, which is a key contributing factor stimulating and necessitating ethnic conflict. This phenomenon begins with one ethnic group, and finally two or more ethnic groups coming to dread that the survival of their ethnic group is at peril. The constant dreading of one ethnic group's survival provides the grounds to exhibit aggression and antagonism towards the other ethnic group(s) in an extreme display of self defence as well as engaging in activities that strive

for domination over the other ethnic group(s). Thus, the moment the fear of ethnical extinction becomes pervasive, they provide the reasonable grounds as well as incitement for an ethnic group to rise up and resort to violence in order to defend and protect their survival. These fears necessitate war as a result of people's desire to avoid losses rather than pursue gains; hence, it becomes easy to mobilize to fight a common threat of loss. This fear of ethnic danger is one that can be extended to explain why leaders of nations rationalize their actions of violence or aggressive attacks on other nations due to other nations being harmful to their survival. Kaufman (1974a) also noted that, even the massacre of the Jewish people was rationalized in an ideology that Jews were both a threat and inferior to the Nazi Germans.

Another contributing factor necessitating ethnic conflict and war as espoused by this theory is opportunity. The notion of opportunity necessitating conflict and war holds that ethnic groups must have sufficient freedom to mobilize politically without being restrained by a superior power, such as the State. The lack of freedom as a result of State policing can diffuse ethnic disagreements and prevent them from intensifying into conflicts and wars. Furthermore, political repression from forces above, such as State authorities, can limit the abilities of individuals to successfully deliver their messages of convincing other ethnic members to rally behind them in conflict and war.

The Symbolic Politics Theory maintains that the presence of antagonistic myths, dread and opportunity will necessitate ethnic wars and conflicts if they escalate mass aggression, chauvinist mobilization by ethnic group leaders who make excessive gains from symbolic appeals; thereby creating a sense of insecurity among groups. Moreover, a variety of triggering factors plays a role by sparking hostile aggression or chauvinist militarization. For example, if traditional myths, dread and hostile aggressions are already pervasive, an opportunity and a stimulating event can trigger the emergence of a strong and powerful ethnic group movement. The consequences of such movements are that they lead to war and conflict if there is a feeling of insecurity, because leaders make dominating/chauvinist appeals that provoke and encourage these movements. At other times, these conflicts are elite-led; whereby, society's powerful elite make advantageous use of these ethnic symbols and ideologies to arouse anxiety, aggression and insecurity among ethnic members. This propels them to engage in violent activities against other groups. In both cases, ethnic war and conflict arise from a cruel feedback cycle that has hostility, extremist

symbolic appeals, and a security dilemma; all of which provide reinforcement that triggers violence and antagonism against ethnic groups. Hence, ethnic wars and conflict can be averted in the absence of any of these mechanism; in other words, if there is excessive fear, and opinion leaders and politicians do not exploit mythical appeals to their selfish interest, or even if they do and such appeals are not heeded to by the populace.

Throughout Africa, antagonistic ideas and ideologies, as well as fear of ethnic extinction, have been the root cause of numerous conflicts. For example, the war that persisted in Sudan until the twentieth century was an ethnic one that was deeply grounded in the hostile identities and traditions of the northerners and southerners. Moreover, it was the result of the enslavement of the south Sudanese by North Sudanese, which threatened the former's survival. The same can be said of the ethnic war in Nigeria from 1967; also known as the Biafra war. The triggering factor for this conflict was the dread of ethnic extinction of the Hausa-Fulani group due to the stereotypical activities of the southern Nigerians. Much can also be said of the Rwandan genocide in which several thousands of lives were lost as a result of its ethnic nature. The history of South Africa moments after apartheid shows how fear of ethnic extinction is important in galvanizing people to war or to peace. Just after the end of apartheid, the white community in South Africa feared extinction. This fear threatened to explode in South Africa, but for the timely intervention of the "Rainbow Message" preached by Nelson Mandela and his African National Congress. The Rainbow Message sought peaceful coexistence between black and white South Africans, and proved successful in resolving the black-white security dilemma.

In summary, the main thrust espoused by the Symbolic Politics Theory as a critical cause of ethnic conflict is a result of people's acceptance of ethnic traditional/myth-symbols that give sufficient grounds for aggression, fear of ethnic extinction with one group proving dominance over others and opportunity where ethnic groups have enough leverage to mobilize resources without any restraint by a superior powers, such as the State.

2.2 Overview of the Instrumentalist Theory

One proponent of the Instrumentalist Theory argues that, by analyzing ethnicity as a cause of ethnic conflict, over-reliance on ancient hatreds oversimplify deeper problems, which are the true cause of conflicts. They also reject the fear of ethnic extinction espoused by the Symbolic Politics Theory. The Instrumentalist Theory maintains that ethnic groups have always been nothing more than material interest groups in cultural clothing (Adu-Amankwaah, 2008). Thus, to the Instrumentalists, even though individuals of same ethnic group might truly share identity and traits that are culturally common, the identification of these commonalities is propelled by rent seeking and clientelism (Adu-Amankwaah, 2008).

According to proponents of Instrumentalism, an ethnic group is regarded as being politically organized with members sharing common typical-identity and traits. Thus, ethnicity is a process of a group pulling resources together to affect the political order to allocate needed resources and benefits to satisfy the differing needs of members. Simply put, an ethnic group is an interest group that seeks the satisfaction of its members, rather than historical recognition. Instrumentalists are of the view that what ethnic groups sought is a collective identity and organization; a desire that sits perfectly within the modern, structurally differentiated polity (Ross, 1978).

To the Instrumentalists, ethnicity is used to gain political leverage, as historical traditions are used only as a means of communicating and exploiting for the benefit of political alignment. Individuals do not engage in violent acts because their traditions differ, but because such violent acts over issues of cultural dissimilarities are simply a means to an end (serious political segmentations). Lake and Rothchild (1998; 7 cited in Blimes, 2006; 537) shared this underlying assertion when they posit that “by itself, ethnicity is not a cause of violent conflict... but when ethnicity is linked with acute social uncertainty, a history of conflict and, indeed, fear of what the future might bring, it emerges as one of the major fault lines along which societies fracture”. Barth (1968) also made significant contributions to Instrumentalism by arguing that, while culture plays a significant role in ethnic group formation, it has less importance for the integrity of an ethnic group. In disagreeing with the effect of primordialism that generation after generation of an ethnic group makes changes to the existing culture, he further argues that the

frontiers that bring separation among ethnic groups are significant but have nothing to do with history.

The Instrumentalist approach argues that ethnicity is a new form of political mobilization that results in the rational pursuit of individual and group self-interest at the expense of the others. By this argument, Rational Choice Theory can be considered an Instrumentalist approach that acknowledges the instrumental understanding of how groups originate and further expound different theories of ethnic conflict. It argues that people will act together any time such acts of collectivism favor their personal interest. Indeed, a sense of ethnicity provides this window of opportunity to act collectively in the name of selfishness. For instance, “If an ethnic group managed to secure political power, it could guarantee material returns for all members of the group, as a mark and visible identity, ethnicity allows no cheaters; communal leadership can monitor who participates in furthering the group interest and who does not, and distribute rewards accordingly” (Young, 2002; 29 cited in Adu-Amankwah, 2008; 29). Young (2002) asserts that comprehensive evidence to support instrumentalism in Africa was brought to light years after the decolonization of the Third World. For example, many African countries, including Uganda, have used ethnicity as political party mobilization. Ultimately, this provided some leverage leading to enrichment of loyal ethnic members at the expense of the masses.

In summary, the main thrust of Instrumentalist Theory on the cause of ethnic conflict are a result of rent seeking and the material benefits that one achieves in the name of ethnicity than the common traits and identity that characterize ethnicity to gain political leverage over the masses by individuals or groups to pursue their parochial interest.

2.3 The Role of Ethnicity in African Politics and Conflicts: Literature Review

Reviewing literature is an important aspect of every research. In this particular context, it is relevant to the extent that it presents a general view of the previous works conducted and how the research will be situated in a proper context. From a distance, literature review captures vividly the differing views or opinions as well as perceptions on the phenomenon under study and further places the study in its right context. In essence, it shares light and also enhances the understanding and appreciation of the reader in relation to previous knowledge and perspective.

Accordingly, this research will review literature on ethnicity, and how it has contributed to various conflicts on the African continent.

Much scholarly work has been done on ethnicity its role as a contributing factor to conflicts in Africa. Chabal and Daloz (1999) maintain that the use of ethnicity within Africa is problematic. This is because, the idea of ethnicity is either seen as a worrying remnant of former traditions that hinders modernization or a disintegrative tool exploited by unprincipled individuals within the political space. In most western countries, the idea of ethnicity comes after citizenship; unfortunately, ethnicity has gained some dominance in Africa because of the way in which contemporary Africa politics has evolved. The thrust of Chabal and Daloz's (1999) argument is that the concept of ethnicity has been misconstrued, both historically and conceptually. In terms of history, Chabal and Daloz maintain that ample evidence exists on what has been termed the "invention of ethnicity"; meaning the *modus operandi* of how ethnicity was constructed and instrumentalized during colonization.

To Chabal and Daloz, the invention of ethnicity means that, while it and its affiliations existed prior to colonization, ethnicity was reconfigured during the period of colonization due to the unexpected and inexplicable changes arising from the interaction between colonial rule and African adaptation. To buttress their assertion, Chabal and Daloz posit it is more important to understand how the present day ethnicity of Hutu or Kikuyu evolved over time than it is to demonstrate that these ethnic groups were created during the colonial period. Even though Chabal and Daloz accept that the woes of Africa cannot be blamed on the colonial authority's policy of balkanization (the division of groups or subgroups in an area into units or hostile units), they maintain that Africa's post-colonial political problems are caused by the imposition of a foreign state, or political system, at independence. According to the authors, it is not the foreignness of the post-colonial state that is responsible for its challenges. Rather, the organisation of the post-colonial state has enabled those Africans who have held power to instrumentalize ethnicity into political tribalism in order to serve their patrimonial interest.

Chabal and Daloz's work is important because it provides some knowledge of the creation of ethnicity in African countries and establishes that this was a result of both the Africans and colonial administrators. They further emphasize that institutions in Africa were weak, leading to present-day situations. The focus of the study conducted by Chabal and Daloz was more on the

analysis of why the African system doesn't work, compared with western countries. In contrast, this research seeks to establish the connections between the balkanization of ethnic groups by the colonial rulers and resultants of conflicts.

Another scholar, Ottaway, in her work *Ethnic Politics in Africa: Changes and Continuity* (Ottaway, 1999) presented a vivid picture of what ethnic politics in Africa and opined that it was basically impossible to dispel gradually ethnic identities. To Ottaway, ethnic identities in Africa are not losing their significance; an assertion premised on the enormous occurrences of hostile conflicts centered on identities. Therefore, the mere fact that people seek to identify themselves with a particular ethnic group has propelled ethnicity to prominence in Africa and other parts of the world. Furthermore, Ottaway maintains that people's desire to associate with their ethnic groups, as well as sacrifice for them has been on the rise with some levels of genuineness. Ottaway's argument offers some support to the notion that problems linked recently to ethnicity in African countries must be inferred as a development in modern society, a result of colonialism and present-day political struggles, rather than a remnant of an archaic or crude past. Ottaway also believes that conflicts resulting from ethnicity are part of the present, and play important roles in the politics of modern Africa and other societies.

Moreover, she believes that the modernization of society, including political and economic development, formal education and other components, would not diminish ethnicity. In the same study, Ottaway asserts that conducting elections democratically destroys the traditional systems premised on naked power or on systems among the enlightened few. These democratic elections have the capacity to corrupt established power dynamics among people bounded by ethnicity; thereby resulting in compounded hostility and violent conflict. In summing up her book, Ottaway maintains that, in today's world characterized by widespread nationalism, insistence on ethnic diversity and democratic pressure which are successful containment of conflicts of ethnicity colors with rules over the last 30 years are no more applicable. She maintains that the thrust of solutions should be premised on the genuine identification that ethnic identities are not going to fade away. Moreover, the world must accept that ethnicity or ethnic identities are not bad, provided they do not become the root cause or breeding grounds for violent conflict and discrimination; rather they can provide a basis for unity.

The work of Ottaway is very useful in the context of this study, as it provides a broad insight into the ethnic problems among Africans today. She also asserts that the issues arising resulting from ethnicity are not limited solely to Africa, but are also prevalent in other non-African societies. Ottaway concedes that for African countries and the rest of the world to overcome these challenges, they must accept without hesitation the rightfulness of ethnic identification differences and find efficient mechanisms of dealing with conflicts; in particular, those that arise from political manoeuvrings of these ethnic groups for political benefits. It must be noted that our problems as Africans are the result of a lack of will to accept that ethnic identities are here to stay. This is an explicit aspect of our society that has led us down the route of heightened tensions among ethnic groups.

To Ottaway, after so many years of independence, ethnic identities have become relatively important in recent times to the political process. This is because politics and multiparty democracy have resulted in the formation of several oblivious and non-oblivious political lines along ethnic lines, which has detrimental effects of manipulation and denying other parties or ethnic groups what they are owed. Interestingly, these views of manipulation and denying of others by some ethnic groups in the shades of political parties posited by Ottaway have been critical to the triggering of ethnic conflicts in Africa. For example, the New Patriotic Party (NPP) and the National Democratic Congress (NDC) - the two major political parties in Ghana - have been observed to be ethnically aligned. The NPP, more often than not, has been portrayed as an Akan (the dominant ethnic group in Ghana) party, while the NDC has been seen as the party of the Ewes (an ethnic group in Ghana of which the study area falls under). These perceptions have led to statements and actions that have had the potency of resulting into conflict. Togbui Afede XIV, the paramount chief of Asogli for example, asserted in 2009 that the NPP Government from 2001 to 2008 neglected the Volta Region, a region dominated by the Ewes.

It is important to note that the differing literature espoused by Chabal and Daloz, and Ottaway to some extent, agrees with the theories outlined above. The assertions made by Ottaway, as well as Chabal and Daloz, can be linked to the instrumentalist view of ethnicity. The instrumentalist opined that, ethnic groupings and identities is a means to a political end. Thus, ethnic leaders or enlightened individuals use ethnicity as means to achieve their political as well as material goals. This is evident in the sense that, in many part of Ghana, ethnicity is used in most cases to gain

political capital, which tends to create unnecessary tension among indigenes. This assertion of instrumentalism is in line with Ottaway's position that the challenge for African countries, as the rest of the world, is to accept the unavoidability, and indeed the legality, of distinct ethnic identities. At best, they should find efficient means of managing conflict arising from political movements to exploit ethnic identities to their benefit.

Simply put, Ottaway perceives ethnicity or ethnic groupings as part of society as well as having the propensity to breed conflict; hence, her position that conflicts that could arise from such exploitation of ethnic groups should be managed effectively. Furthermore, even though Chabal and Daloz considered ethnicity a divisive political weapon used by political charlatans for self-interest, they maintain that the excesses of ethnic identities is not a result of the foreignness of colonization. Rather, they state it is the result of a post-colonial structure that has reinforced Africans who have been in leadership to instrumentalize ethnicity into political tribalism and satisfy their parochial interest. In addition, the arguments made by Chabal and Daloz also entail the ideas of fear, denial and neglect of others, as well as ethnic manoeuvrings that trigger ethnic conflicts; ideas espoused by the Symbolic Politics Theory.

2.4 Impact of Conflict on Social Development

According to UNEP (2006), armed conflicts have a propensity to bear a multiplicity of long and short-term impacts on social development, in addition to human and environmental well-being. The impacts of internal feuds are manifested at diverse spatial levels, in the immediate region of conflict and neighboring nations. In general, conflict destabilizes or devastates environmental social, physical and human capital, in addition to diminishing accessible openings for sustainable development. It is evident that conflict continues to impact on human welfare, where it has manifestly destabilized people's quality of life and their accessible legitimate choices. Consequently, this has resulted in the loss of livelihoods, lives, opportunities and human dignity, as well as basic human rights. For example, the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict has had a direct effect on the livelihoods of the populace through reduced access to land and insufficient access to the region's natural resources, due to isolation, dislodgment and the loss of biodiversity. It is imperative to mention that this conflict has also triggered a cycle of dilapidation, as well as human vulnerability. From this perspective, it should be noted human vulnerability denotes not

only the susceptibility to negative environmental changes, but also the capacity to manage such changes through mitigation or adaptation.

According to UNESCO (2010), in a study conducted by its statistics institutes in 25 countries, it is an undeniable fact that conflicts of all nature affect greatly the educational system of the conflict area. The study demonstrated the multifaceted effect of conflict on education, from access to school, progress through the educational system, destruction of facilities, teacher's absenteeism, and children insecurity while commuting to school or attending class, among others. This is anchored by Sany (2010), who asserts that in such conflict areas, education is relegated to the bottom in terms of national priorities to the extent that stakeholders are more concerned with finding a lasting solution to the conflicts. In such situations, education, which is seen as the bedrock of every country's development, is affected significantly which, in turn, impacts on the social development within the area of conflict.

In relation to conflict and its impact on property, people are becoming displaced within their own community. Property destruction can take several forms, ranging from basic infrastructures, houses and agricultural products, to farmlands, national resources and environments, among many others. According to UNEP (2006), conflicts have a propensity of multifaceted impact on people's properties both in the short and long-term. Such destruction is seen manifestly in the quality of life as well as affecting the basic human rights of the affected people in regions where conflicts have destroyed the social fabric of societies.

The impact of conflicts on social development can also be seen in the area of intermarriages. Sociologists place a premium on the link between intermarriage and ethnic identity. Therefore, in an area of ethnic conflict where clashing parties are seen as enemies, intermarriages are prohibited. Cultural identity and chauvinism play a critical role in inter-ethnic conflicts; therefore, one group does not want to identify with other groups, which negatively affect social life. Furtado & Trejo (2012) further assert that since much importance is attached to ethnicity and identity intermarriages become a social boundaries which can completely erase their true identity. Therefore, in an ethnically-conflicted area, intermarriages are strongly prohibited because they weaken the entrenched positions of conflicting parties; thereby, lessening their true identity.

According to Onoma (2009), ethnic conflicts contribute significantly to the collapse of social cohesion, as well as the impediment of local governance structures. Subsequently, this might lead to the inaccessibility of the standard safety nets. In this regard, the escalating economic and social vulnerability, attributable to ethnic conflict, might in the context of land and environmental degradation, generate new tensions, as well as conflict over vital resources; for example, water or food. Poverty incidence is also likely to increase in the course of the loss of livelihoods, in addition to an escalating inability of populace to cope with changes. According to Keefer and Knack (2002), this loss of resilience relates directly to a reduced accessibility to public services. This can lead to an escalating incidence of sickness, a reduction in formal job openings, and the devastation of subsistence livelihoods. Moreover, several entitlements may disintegrate, which involve consumption as well as nutrition. This is in addition to the deterioration of social cohesion and worsening insecurity.

Agbewode (2013) asserts that the dislodgment of persons is a key social and economic cost of ethnic conflict, both in the short-term and the post-conflict phases. Normally, the casualties of contemporary armed ethnic conflicts are civilians. Since ethnic conflict usually engages ethnic overtones, and since contemporary conflicts in the African continent typically involve guerrillas, and militias instead of regular troops, it is easy to target the civilian populace. This is because they share similar cultural or ethnic identity to the enemy group. According to UNEP (2006), a study executed by DFID in 2001 established that, since 1960, more than eight million people have perished as a direct or indirect consequence of war and ethnic conflicts across Africa. In this context, projections show that by 2020, war injuries in the African continent may be considered the eighth leading factor in placing a sickness burden on the society. In this context, violence continues to assume new forms, with the purposeful targeting of the civilian population, in addition to an escalating incidence of rape, mutilations and violent rituals. Specific populations may be targeted, who depend on the natural resources, such as land, as a majority of the population in the Volta region. These insurgency strategies are employed by a number of factions and result in forced displacement of persons, the devastation of livelihoods, undue poverty, in addition to food insecurity. Consequently, large areas become desolate and agricultural output reduces; thereby impacting negatively on local livelihoods, as well as the Ghanaian national economy. One major and often lingering impact of ethnic conflict is the

devastation of the social fabric, which entails informal systems of support and trust, in addition to undermining governance (Chabal & Daloz, 1999).

2.5 Impact of Conflict on Economic Development

Conflicts impact on local, regional and national economic development. From this perspective, the following discussion treats this emergent regionalism and budding localisms as interconnected characteristics of emerging territorial politics. According to Boone (2012), the emerging territorial politics revolve around restructuring core-periphery relationships, reorganizing political hierarchies in constituencies that are territorially defined, reconceptualizing the locus of control in regard to market access, as well as resources. This is in addition to imposing political power, and sub-national civil liberties in regions, as well as localities. It should be noted that ethnic conflicts also have diverse impacts at the macro-level, such as the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict.

Shinta (2009) asserts that these impacts entail a reduced state capacity that is linked to a lessening revenue base, in addition to significant economic stagnation. Moreover, they entail decreased public spending that is attributable to disinvestment, plummeting exports, depreciating exchange rates, hyper-inflation, as well as capital flight. In this context, the economic impacts are seldom limited to the nation of conflict. Therefore, it follows that nations bordering conflict zones might require enhanced security spending in military, as well as non-military, segments. In addition, such nations might incur new expenditure in regard to refugees, as well as losses emanating from weakening regional trade. An additional aspect of ethnic conflict is the disintegration of public institutions or the failure of such institutions to survive.

According to UNEP (2006), a study conducted by the Department for International Development (DFID) in 2001 revealed that, for the period between 1980 and 2000, the African continent lost more than 50 percent of its core infrastructure due to conflicts. According to Bah (2004), local, national and global issues are increasingly important in creating and perpetuating ethnic conflicts. Moreover, these issues interact in diverse and shifting ways. It should be noted that, at the local level in regard to the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict, controversy over access to land and other resources has been a core ingredient in the creation of armed factions, which are usually related to broader national or cross-border economic interests or political feuds. This might lead

to the militarization of the socio-economic space at the local level, including increasingly violent antagonism over economic infrastructure, as well as resources and trade networks. It should be noted that, in several cases, this might be expressed in rent-seeking activities by factions; for example, the land guards in many regions across Ghana, with access to military influence or direct appropriation, in addition to transfer of assets. It is imperative to mention that this militarization limits the local population's access to markets, and drives up transaction costs and the cost of living.

According to John (2010), conflicts are typically expected to lead to production losses of up to 12 percent, in addition to undercutting development in the agricultural segment by approximately 3 percent per annum. Therefore, by widening the divide between food production and need, conflicts exacerbate poverty, as well as hunger and continued reliance on food aid. The devastation and collapse of infrastructure impacts significantly on the provision of necessary services; thereby resulting in the disintegration of communication, in the course of the loss of roads and telecommunication networks. This might amplify the degree of isolation experienced presently by the communities living in the Volta region, and may further reduce their sense of nationality, in addition to contributing to a diminishing civil society. It should be noted that infrastructural crumbling leads to a significant loss of market, as well as related economic openings.

According to Nyamu-Musembi (2006), conflicts in large regions can result in them falling under the command of non-State players. This emanates from the collapse of environmental institutions, as well as governance structures, leading to lower managerial competence. The functions of environmental, as well as other pertinent agencies, are significantly impeded by lack of resources or loss of human resources. It is in this context that low monitoring and evaluation levels might contribute to the loss of biodiversity, in addition to encouraging illegitimate and untenable trade in the region's natural resources. It is evident that natural resources in the Volta region might be exploited at unsustainable rates in order to procure weaponry, or purely to enrich associates of the controlling factions. Ballard and Banks (2003) argue that ethnic identity that is encouraged within-group collaboration may as well encourage inter-group antagonism over land and other resources. Subsequently, this may impact negatively on a region's economic development. The authors argue that linkages exist between low economic developments, and

intensify ethnic tensions. In this context, the authors endeavor to fashion a distinction between ethnic polarization and ethnic heterogeneity with the suggestion that social polarization leads to the decline of economic institutions that safeguard property rights and, consequently, decrease economic development.

However, according to Keefer and Knack (2002), by evaluating ethnic tensions in order to proxy the intensity of ethnic polarization in a nation, it is possible to verify the corrosive impact of ethnic polarization on economic institutions, even where a nation has established democratic processes. In addition, ethnic heterogeneity results in reduced production of development-generating public goods. Social polarization that is anchored in ethnicity can preclude the prospects of building institutions that lessen the necessity to belong to a specific group, in order to attain access to land and other resources. However, several scholars advocate that strong institutions may in reality engender the social cohesion, even across ethnic lines. This may facilitate the economic development of a nation such as Ghana. It is evident that ethnic diversity in isolation may not nurture the requisite polarization levels to impede institutional development and, subsequently, economic development.

Chapter Three

Methodology

This chapter focuses on the methodology of this study; namely, the framework within which this research was conceived and conducted. The chapter's thrust is on providing a vivid account of the approaches used in collecting data from the Alavanyo and Nkonya communities. The purpose of this study is to identify and analyze factors that trigger and escalate communal conflicts and how these threaten the stability and forward march of Ghana. The Alavanyo-Nkonya land conflict is used as a case study.

The chapter is arranged such that it introduces the reader firstly to the study area, its economic and political structures in brief, before proceeding to the concept of fieldwork as well as the various assumptions underlying it. In addition, a detailed account is given of the research methods and strategies utilized in conducting this study, in addition to the techniques adopted and procedures followed. Finally, the chapter will provide an explanation of the various steps followed in processing and analyzing the collected data.

3.1 Study Area

Ghana is a West African state situated along the Atlantic Ocean and Gulf of Guinea, sharing borders with Ivory Coast, Togo and Burkina Faso to the west, east and north respectively. Ghana is a sovereign unitary state with 10 administrative areas, known as regions. Notable among these 10 regions is the Volta Region. This particular region, formerly known as German Togoland, is located in the east of Ghana and occupies a land mass of about 20,570 square kilometers. The administrative capital is Ho and is mostly inhabited by the Ewes. The Volta Region has 25 administrative areas with the Hohoe Municipality and Biakoye Districts as examples.

The Nkonyan-Alavanyo conflict is an ethnic conflict that is decades old and the result of a misunderstanding about the rightful owner of land between the people of Alavanyo, an Ewe community, and the people of Nkonya, a Guan community. Interestingly, the two communities

are situated in different districts in the Volta Region. Alavanyo lies within the Hohoe Municipality, whereas Nkonya lies within the Biakoye District; however, the two communities share a common geographical boundary.

3.2 Economic Characteristics of Nkonya and Alavanyo

The Nkonya and Alavanyo communities are characterized by some shared common economic, including agriculture and commerce, and petty trading. One major economic activity in both Nkonya and Alavanyo is agriculture, which employs many community members of Nkonya and Alavanyo. Most community members are engaged in farming either for subsistence or for the market. Some major crops grown in these communities include palm nuts, maize and cassava. Some other community members engage in livestock rearing, including poultry and sheep. Another economic activity engaged in by inhabitants of Alavanyo and Nkonya is commerce or petty trading, which involves the trading of goods such as crops and livestock. Most people frequent the Nkonya-Alavanyo areas to buy foodstuffs and livestock from the local inhabitants. The conflict, characterized as a gun battle, has made some other members of the two communities engage in the blacksmith profession to ensure the continued manufacture and supply of locally-made weapons (small pistols or arms).

3.3 Political Structures

Even though Nkonya and Alavanyo are located in two different regional administrative areas, two main levels of political authority exist in these areas. The first is the administrative authority where in the case of Alavanyo it is the Hohoe Municipal Assembly and Biakoye District Assembly for Nkonya. This is instituted by the Local Government Law (PNDC Law 207, 1988) to provide local administration. The local assembly is the highest political authority in the district or municipality, running the functional administration in addition to ensuring the provision of social amenities for local people. In addition, it plans and executes the developmental agenda of the local people. The Assembly is responsible for the day-to-day administration of the municipality, development decision-making, the provision of social services, preparation and submission of development plan and budget. Traditional Authority capsulizes the chieftaincy institution. Both communities have chiefs or traditional authorities that engage in a series of

activities including land allocations, dispute settlement, upholding traditional customs and serving as the custodian of people's beliefs, aspirations and culture at the local level.

3.4 Introduction to Fieldwork in Nkonya-Alavanyo

The term 'Fieldwork' is used in two different ways in Social Science research. The first involves using the term generally to capture the variegating methods of qualitative research. To Burges (1990), fieldwork is a means of conducting a research investigation; also known as interpretive research, qualitative method and case study. In the second instance, as noted by Payne and Payne (2004), the term refers to some aspect of the qualitative research method; specifically, the process of collecting qualitative data or information within a period of time in a natural setting. Nevertheless, the term can also be used to refer to any trip made to collect research data, whether or not it is in a targeted social context. Simply put, fieldwork "can mean data collection stage of a project (particularly in the qualitative tradition); or researchers go about collecting data; or more narrowly, data collection in a social setting that tries to reflect the naturally occurring order of events and subjective meanings of those being studied" (Payne and Payne, 2004:94)

The composition of fieldwork has also been disputed by different scholars. The focus of fieldwork to some scholars has been on the critical role of the researcher or the person in the field, as well as the primary information collected. Conversely, other scholars maintain strongly the type of information or data, or the methods and tools used in fieldwork. To Pole (2005), fieldwork is an approach to conducting scientific investigations that emphasizes collecting data directly from the source by the investigator or researcher. Thus, fieldwork is dependent on the interaction between the investigator(s) and the population being researched. It is conducted in a research context whereby the investigator(s) uses a method or a combination of research methods to collect the required information over a set period of time. Interestingly, Chakravarti (1979:38) buttresses Pole's point by opining that "fieldwork is a personal experience because it involves close interaction or 'intimate long-term acquaintance' (Wolcott, 2005:45) between the researcher and the subjects of his research".

Two types of fieldwork methods exist; namely, interviews and participant observation. To Creswell (2009), the participant observation is one that the researcher takes needed field notes on the actions and inactions of research participants through observation. However, interview involves the researcher conducting a face-to-face interview with research participants, either individually or in a group (known as the focus group).

For this study, interview is the chosen fieldwork method employed for data collection and concentrates on two main issues: first is the collection of data from direct sources or collection of first-hand information within and outside naturally occurring contexts; and the second is the role the researcher played in the field where data was collected. Thus, the researcher is equipped to exchange information with the researched group or better still engage in fruitful interactions between the researcher and the group. This was critical in unearthing hidden factors necessitating this conflict.

3.5 The Sources of Data Collection

This study bases its sources of data collection on two main sources; primary and secondary. As noted by Silverman (2006), the primary source of data collection is one consisting of data acquired through interviews. Usually, interviews are the main source or method of acquiring data; therefore, for this research, a semi-structured interview was developed and used as the main tool to collect data by conducting formal and informal interviews with respondents. The purpose of using semi-structured interview as a qualitative research technique was as a result of the urgency to extract detailed and vivid responses pertaining to the historical antecedents of this conflict, factors that ignites and sustain this conflict, the impact of the conflict on them and the community to which they belong, in addition to the emotions provoked by this conflict.

The secondary source of data for this study comprises all necessary but accessible documents concerning the war since it first broke out and other related conflict documents. These include reports on government committees that have been set in past years, memoranda, press releases and conference notes. Others documents referred to include previous research works on the conflict, journals, newspapers and news bulletins, and books. Some of these materials were gathered from intensive searches in the Libraries of the Political Science Department, the

Institute of African Studies as well as the Balme library of the University of Ghana. Examples of secondary sources of data are Ghana News Agency (22/08/2008) news item titled Midodzi, and Jaha's (2002) paper titled Assessing the effectiveness of the alternative dispute resolution mechanism in the Nkonya-Alavanyo conflict in the Volta Region of Ghana, and Tsikata and Seini's (2004) paper titled Identities, inequalities and conflicts in Ghana.

3.6 Research Design

The method used in this study is qualitative research. As noted by Holliday (2002:2), a qualitative research design is one that seeks to "describe actions within a specific setting and invites rather than tries to control the possibility of a rich array of variables". Simply put, qualitative researches have the tendency to explore difficulty to control social variables directly rather than reducing them to numbers. This is why Denzin and Lincoln (2005) posited that qualitative research is one that is full of interpretative and naturalistic perspective to the world. Thus, researchers engaged in the qualitative researches explore variables and behaviors in their natural habitat with the aim of making plausible understanding of events as well as the attached meaning.

The decision to collect research data through fieldwork was made in tandem with the study's purpose. The study aims to find first-hand information about the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict and the impact of this conflict. Therefore, it is logical that the most effective way of achieving this was to visit the natural habitat of this conflict and assess its impact from people living in these communities. Moreover, the decision to rely solely on the qualitative method was made as a result of the limited time and financial resources available for this research.

Furthermore, the decision to engage in fieldwork as a means of collecting data was due to the need for more detailed but complex information of why the conflict has persisted, as well as the impact on community members. As posited by Creswell; "this detail can only be established by talking directly with people, going to their homes or places of work and allowing them to tell the stories unencumbered by what we expect to find or what we have read from the literature" (Creswell, 2007:40). For example, the real impact of this conflict on communal members can only be assessed by talking to them directly.

3.7 Arriving in Nkonya-Alavanyo

This study aims to explore the impact of ethnic conflict, using the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict as a case study. Once the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict was selected, a few friends were contacted. These were people who hailed from either Alavanyo or Nkonya or could facilitate access to significant people in the two communities for the purpose of data collection. I linked up with them informing them about the details of this research and asked them to seek formal permission from the community chiefs, and obtain the contacts of the potential respondents.

Prior to my arrival, these friends made some progress in the search for appropriate respondents. When I arrived in Ghana, specifically in Accra, I spent two days putting the needed materials to be used in the data collection process as well as scheduling appointments with the few respondents identified. After this, I finally made the journey, firstly to Alavanyo followed by Nkonya.

My first contact was in Alavanyo, who also linked me up with two other respondents. It must be stated that due to my unfamiliarity with the Alavanyo community, the role of my first contact in was very significant since his contacts finally led me to the much needed persons. My contacts in Nkonya interestingly also made some participants readily available awaiting my arrival; hence, when I got to Nkonya, I only needed to determine their locations.

Having finally identified the participants from the Alavanyo and Nkonya communities, I apprised each of them with the details of this research and sought their consent to participate.

3.8 Sample and Sampling Procedure

The populations for this study included chiefs and elders, political leaders, opinion leaders as well as community members within the Alavanyo and Nkonya communities. The study sought to collect data from five respondents from each of the two communities. It must be noted that this target was achieved; hence, data was collected from a total of 10 respondents. It is also important to state that, apart from one respondent (male) from Hohoe but living in Alavanyo, all respondents hailed from either Alavanyo or Nkonya. Simply put, four respondents hailed from

Alavanyo, while five were from Nkonya. This spread ensured data was collected from a broader perspective from different sub communities within Alavanyo and Nkonya.

The gender of respondents was also considered. In all, data was collected from seven males [four from Alavanyo and three from Nkonya] and three females [one from Alavanyo and two from Nkonya]. These respondents had various occupational backgrounds and life experiences. There were two indigenous farmers, traders and elders from the two towns. The remainders are student, teacher, assemblyman and a concerned citizen. It is regrettable to note that gender balance was not achieved as the majority of females contacted opted not to participate. This was also influenced by the limited time spent in the field.

The specific sampling techniques adopted were purposive and snowball sampling techniques. The study employed the purposive sampling technique because a respondent must be a resident of either of the communities and must either fall within the specified targeted population. The snowball sampling technique was also used because most respondents were identified through the first contacted respondents. Thus, contacted respondents led me to other participants.

3.9 Reliability of Data

As noted by Patton (2002), qualitative inquiry is rife with ambiguities. Qualitative inquiry seems to work best for people with a high tolerance of ambiguity. Nowhere is this ambiguity clearer than sample size. There are no rules for sample size in qualitative inquiry. Therefore, based on what the researchers want to find out, the sample size will depend on what the researcher wants to know, the purpose of the inquiry and what can be achieved in the available time (pp.242-243). The decision to use only 10 participants for the study was based on the fact that, almost all participants seemed to be saying the same thing regardless of whether they were from Alavanyo or Nkonya. The provision of similar information reflects Patton's (2002) assertion and makes the information provided by these participants reflective of the broader picture regarding the conflict and its consequences.

3.10 Conducting the Interviews

Prior to the actual collection of data, a pilot study was conducted to test the interview guide. This provided the opportunity to refine and reconfigure the interview guide to suit the kind of data I wanted to collect; consequently, some of the items were either removed or reframed. The pilot study indicated the sensitivity of some sensitive questions and how to phrase them in the actual interview. For the Alavanyos, a sensitive case was insinuating that the land they were fighting over belonged originally to the Nkonyans. This proved very helpful since it gave me an indication of what to expect and how to probe further the answers of respondents. Moreover, it provided the scope to verify some of the claims made by respondents.

With informed consent sought and respondents assured of their confidentiality, the actual interviews were conducted. The interviews were tape-recorded and key issues that emerged were written down. The interview session prior to being recorded began with me introducing myself officially, stating the purpose of the research and assuring the participant of his confidentiality. Once this was done, I proceeded by first asking the participant to introduce him or herself.

3.11 Ethical Considerations

During the conduct of this research, much attention was given to the understanding and application of the ethical codes outlined by the American Psychological Association (APA). Thus, the research design and methodology, and the general acceptability of the study in terms of ensuring that the gains of conducting this study, far outweighed the losses of not carrying it out were all taken into consideration. It must be stated emphatically that, during the participants' selection and recruitment, tactful persuasion and diplomacy was employed to get participants participate in the research. No amount of coercion was used on participants to take part in the research. Moreover, no inducement of any kind was using to secure participants for this research. All participants were inhabitants of both Alavanyo and Nkonya who willfully and voluntarily decided to take part in the research.

Ethical standards were achieved by first seeking formal permission from the chiefs of both Alavanyo and Nkonya to use their people for an academic research. Information sheets were provided to each participant, outlining the purpose, aims, risks, extent of anonymity and confidentiality, institutional approval and assented informed consent for the research. The extent of anonymity and confidentiality were explained to participants. This was done by participants being told clearly that the research will not seek any information such as names and telephone numbers, and that research data will not be disclosed to anyone except those involved in the research project. To ensure confidentiality, all interviews were conducted within a confined space containing only the interviewer and the interviewee. Recording of interviews was also consented to by participants. They were informed about the risk involved in taking part in the research as well as informed explicitly of their freedom to withdraw from the research at any time without penalty.

3.12 Data Processing and Preliminary Interview Analysis

The processing and analysis of data began once all interviews were conducted. The first step was to transcribe all the collected data. This involved a verbatim transcription of the recorded audio of participants. With data transcription completed, interview data was analysed using thematic-content analysis (Miles & Huberman, 1994), in which the explanations and thoughts shared by participants during the interview were related to different themes emanating from the study. Thus, all the transcribed data was thoroughly read through and key themes and their corresponding explanations properly documented.

Guided by Spradley's (1979) guidelines to ethnographic studies, three steps were taken in the data analysis process. First, participants' responses to each question were listed in order of interviewee. Second, the diverse responses to each of the questions were assessed using the following questions. Were there dominant subject matter in their answers? Was there a recurrent opinion expressed by most of the participants? Is there a single statement that vividly illustrates the point of views expressed by participants? Though a tedious process it was achieved by reading through all the data several times to gain familiarity. This was followed by the clustering and categorisation of the various responses under emerging themes. Themes defined by Taylor and Bogdan (1984; 131) as "units derived from patterns such as conversation topics, vocabulary

recurring activities, meanings, feelings or folk sayings and proverbs” were thus induced from the interview transcripts.

Open coding, which “primarily involves giving descriptive codes and a low level of abstraction to help flag themes from the interview data” (Neuman, 2000: 421), was performed to flag up themes emerging from the interview data. With the researcher employing flexibility and an open mind in handling the interview transcripts, the codes generated from this initial process however became analytical in nature as new information and understanding emerged during the analysis process. Axial coding, which involves the organisation of ideas or themes in a coherent manner (Neuman, 2000), was undertaken after the initial open coding process to cluster similar ideas expressed and to ensure coherency. Thus, initial concepts were developed, new concepts formed and others reformulated as the process of analysis continued. Finally, these codes were organised for the overall analysis around several core generalizations or ideas.

Chapter Four

Empirical Findings

4.1 Introduction

The results of this study are presented in three sections. The first part of this chapter provides a brief presentation of participants' relevant information. The second aspect of the findings indicates data that relates to reasons for the Nkonya-Alavanyo conflict. In this section, the two main emerging themes are discussed; namely, the economic prospect of the disputed land and the traditional heritage. The final section presents data relating to the implications of the protracted Nkonya-Alavanyo conflict in line with the second research question. This section is entitled, what is the impact of the Nkonya-Alavanyo conflict in the communities? This section looks at the posture of participants with respect to the negative toll the conflict is having on the inhabitants of Nkonya and Alavanyo. The analysis of this section is based on three main themes: the social, economic and psychology impact of the conflict. Overall, appropriate extracts from the interviews were used to substantiate points made under each theme.

4.2 Participants' Demographic Characteristics

A total of 10 respondents were selected from both Nkonya and Alavanyo. The 10 informants consisted of seven males and three females. These respondents had various occupational backgrounds and life experiences. There were two indigenous farmers, traders and elders from the two towns. The remainders are a student, teacher, assemblyman and a concerned citizen. The 10 participants used for the study had spent an average of 42 years in their respective towns.

4.3 Reasons Accounting for the Protracted Nkonya-Alavanyo Conflict

Most of the participants indicated that the said conflict has been in existence for a very long time with no end in sight. The possible reasons for this notable conflict between the people of Nkonya and Alavanyo will be elaborated in this section. The section is concerned with the first research question which sought to find out the reason for the Nkonya-Alavanyo conflict in the Volta

region of Ghana. In the analysis, two major themes emerged from the data; namely, the economic prospect of the disputed land and the conflict as a traditional heritage.

4.3.1 Economic Prospect of the Disputed Land

According to Bogner (2000), at the local platform, access to land, as well as other natural resources is critical for the livelihood of rural peoples; while at the national platform, livestock and agriculture represent a significant ingredient of the gross national product across African nations. In this context, it is apparent that an environment of escalating land, as well as demographic pressure, generates substantial negative impacts on land and other natural resources; this is evident in the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict. In this debacle, the casual link between land tenure, agricultural intensification, labor productivity and consequently poverty, as well as socio-economic disparities lie at the center of the debate. Conversely, the bearing of causal linkages has not been persuasively clarified to this point.

Sands and Stewart (2010), argue that ecological concerns in regard to sustainable development and nature conservation have emerged in the past decades, taking into consideration the competing claims that are raised by the conflicting communities over land and other natural resources. According to Boafo-Arthur (2003), in the context of the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict, access to land and other natural resources is not entirely an issue of the productive utilization of the ecological environment. In contrast, this also entails power, as well as having symbolic implications. It should be noted that, debates regarding political and administrative decentralization, in addition to the issue of community-based natural resource management, involve issues regarding the location of the decision-making entity. Moreover, there are power modalities and resource devolution, which ultimately appear at the forefront of accountability mechanisms.

In this subsection, analysis of the data focus on issues of economic benefits associated with the land under contention as responsible for the drawn-out conflict between the people of Nkonya and Alavanyo in the Volta Region of Ghana. Land is an economic good and affords its owners economic and developmental opportunities, such as farming, building market places, houses, schools among other social infrastructures. It should be noted that, changes since the eruption of

conflicts as noted in the respondents response to the various questions posed to them are based on the realization of the economic value of the land. Both communities recognize the value of the land as a result of its natural resources. While the respondents from both sides indicated that the Nkonya people are the original owners of the said land but gave it out to the people of Alavanyo who have since resided on it for years, both communities are unwilling to relinquish ownership since its economic value has increased. Moreover, claiming possession may boost the benefits derived from the lands to develop their communities.

In summary, this is one major reason that has contributed to the increasing violence between the two communities with all the necessary efforts to bring peaceful co-existence has proven a mirage. The majority of participants reported that the conflict is the result of a misunderstanding concerning ownership of a parcel of land which is deemed to be rich in minerals and forest reserves. A student from Alavanyo alluded to this as the remote cause of the conflict.

“Nkonya are deemed to be people who hosted the Alavanyos and later on they realize that there is this sacred forest that is full of trees and valuable natural resources are found in that reserve but this Alavanyo people where then targeting some of these valuable natural resources of which the Nkonya people were not happy with . So I think the genesis of the whole conflict can be traced to the idea that the Nkonya people were of the view that they were the original people who entertained them on the land so once they find themselves on the land they are not supposed to get full access to that supposed natural resourced space.”(*Alavanyo student interview*)

“It’s a very dicey situation but I think it’s mainly because of the land, you know very rich land that borders Alavanyo and Nkonya so it has become a feud between the Alavanyo people and our people (Nkonya) for a possession of that particular land. So that is what is causing the problem now, everybody wants to fight for that land and own ownership of that land.” (*Nkonya assemblyman interview*)

“Our neighbours, Alavanyo people came here asking for land to stay and we gave them a land to settle but the land we gave them is very rich with many resources including timber species, and even coca, oil palm and food stuff and a whole lot. The land is very rich. So we wanted to take

our land back but the people of Alavanyo have refused, just because it is their land, forgetting that we gave them the land. So that has brought this conflict between us.” (*Nkonya concerned citizen interview*)

A teacher, who resides in Nkonya, stressed the economic value of the disputed land as contributing significantly to the conflict. Given the fact that the land “is rich, the soil is fertile”, she posit that, its exploitation will improve the livelihood of the beneficiary town.

“...the economic viability of that land is a major reason, It is rich, the soil is fertile, there is a lot of trees and all that, it’s because of the economic value that is why.....because if it was a rocky place we wouldn’t be fighting over it. Because if we gain something from the land then it will help us in our livelihood so we also want to live there.” (*Nkonya teacher interview*)

It stands to reason that the admission by those from Alavanyo that the Nkonya people are the original owners of the land makes it difficult for the current generation from Nkonya to let go of the disputed land. Furthermore, reports suggest that the disputed land is endowed with large volumes of minerals and forest reserves, which is a major factor in why both towns continue to claim ownership of the land. This has, in no small way, prolonged the conflict and made life uncomfortable for everyone living in the communities.

4.3.2 The Conflict as a Traditional Heritage

According to Mamdani (2011), the conflict in several parts of the African continent might seem meaningless, but the roots are anchored in institutional practices that were established during the colonial era. However, decades of independence from colonial rule have only aggravated the situation. At the core of these conflicts, such as the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict, is an institution that may be referred to as the indigenous authority. Ever since the colonial era, indigenous authorities have held jurisdiction over ethnic homelands. As a power structure, the indigenous authority alleges to represent primordial ethnic identity. However, ethnicity denotes cultural distinction, and there is no essential relationship between territory and culture. Conversely, a structure of ethnic authority asserts an essential link between power, territory, and culture. Ethnic identity in the African continent preceded colonial governance, unlike ethnic homelands or the indigenous authority. It is from this background that indigenous authority is anchored in a

distinct politicized identity, which is referred to as the tribe, and differentiates two categories of ethnic communities. In the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict, the Nkonya is the indigenous community, while the Alavanyo is considered the immigrant community.

Besides the economic benefits, the belief on the part of natives from the two towns suggesting that the conflict has become a tradition to protect tends to encourage the persistence of the struggle. Majority of the participants reported that, the conflict has been ongoing since the days of their forefathers and it is their turn to continue a course that has been bequeathed to them. According to the respondents, it will be unfortunate not to fight for what rightfully belongs to them. A trader at Nkonya puts it this way:

“...you know is about land issues and I must admit that the fight or conflict did not start today, many, many years ago before I was even born and it has been transferred from generations to generations and if God does not come I will die and my grandchildren will take it on. But basically, fundamentally is all about our land that they claim it is also theirs. But you know historical antecedent shows clearly that even where there are living now, it is an offer we gave them some years ago when they had no place to stay and then our great grandfathers gave them an opportunity to be staying where they are staying now and they claim its theirs. So basically we have been in this struggle for years just because for lands.” (*Nkonya trader interview*)

A farmer at Alavanyo who happens to be a traditionalist expressed the views below. These statements seem to be shared by majority in the Alavanyo community.

“It is our land given to us by our great grandfathers and whether you like it or not, me as a traditional person I believe that posterity will judge our integrity if we do not fight with the last clot of blood for us to redeem our image for us to get our land in fact..., and I’m sure that one day by the help of our ancestors and the gods and all that we will get our lands back.” (*Alavanyo farmer interview*)

“... you don’t let go what your fathers passed you, in fact the land has been part of our very existence, so you can imagine if you had to give away what your parents and grandparents passed down on to you, it will look like a failure on the current generation. Besides we think that

the land belongs to us so why do we give it to someone or people who don't own the land. It belongs to us my son, so we can't just give it away.” (*Alavanyo elder interview*)

The youth in particular are bent on safeguarding the rich cultures of the land. Thus, the fact that they perceive the conflict as part of their cultural heritage makes it difficult for them to bring a peaceful closure to the struggle. One youth at Nkonya, also a farmer narrated it this way:

“Our forefathers have advised us that this is our land and that it is not right for a stranger to come to a foreign land to possess the land. It is not heard of so we are holding high the rich culture of our fathers and forefathers which is to protect every property that belongs to us, which is what we are doing. ” (*Nkonya farmer interview*)

The above narratives suggest that the Nkonya-Alavanyo conflict is ongoing due to the perception held by both communities that the conflict is an implicit aspect of their rich cultural heritage inherited from their ancestors. Moreover, failing to fight for what belongs to them is regarded as a betrayal of trust.

4.4 What is the Impact of the Nkonya-Alavanyo Conflict in the Communities?

The main objective of this section is to present and discuss the data generated from the interviews in order to explain respondent opinions on the implications of the Nkonya-Alavanyo conflict on the the communities. This section is consistent with the second research question. Analyses of the data revealed that all participants regard the conflict as taking a negative toll on their livelihoods and development. The data presented in this section explains the aspect of life where participants believe has been affected adversely by the conflict. The section comprises three themes: social, economic and psychological impact of the conflict.

4.4.1 Social Impact of the Conflict

This theme addresses the social ramifications of the conflict that the majority of participants believe are seriously affecting them. This means that the social life of the people of Nkonya and Alavanyo communities could have been improved without the conflict. There were four sub-

themes under the social factors: interrupted educational system and prohibition of inter-marriages; and destruction of homes and properties. Thus, the participants believe these issues have emerged as a result of the conflict.

4.4.1.1 Interrupted Educational System

The issue of an interrupted educational system concerns the intermittent changes in the academic calendar as a result of the conflict. Participants said they are not happy with the situation since it holds back their children in school compared with other conflict-free communities. It is a worrying situation, as they believe the state of the educational system is impinging on their development. Consider the following statements by some of the participants regarding how the conflict has affected the education of the two communities.

“You can attest to the fact that education is very inevitable as far as the progress and development of every nation or town is concern. But, because of the conflict the children won’t go to school and teachers will not even come. Everybody is trying to protect his or her life. Because who knows when you get out of your room what will happen to you? This leads to a breakage in the academic calendar and when things come down a bit and people go to write the exam because peace has been renewed in the interim they won’t do well in the exams because they have lost a whole lot of academic work. So I must say that it has a great impact on our educational system”. (*Nkonya farmer interview*)

An assembly man from Nkonya narrated how school going youth in the area become involved in the conflict to the extent that they become more preoccupied with conflict than their education. According to him, parents often preclude their children from going to school in an attempt to protect them injury or death. Other participants share the same view point.

“Basically, the youth are mostly used in this conflict and they don’t get the chance to go to school, move ahead in school and so on. The conflict of course brings them this kind of insecurity so no parent will want to leave the child during when the conflict irrups in the community, to go to school so it affects students educationally. They will have some problems

obviously in school even mingling with some other people from the other side and so on and so forth.” (*Assemblyman, Nkonya*)

“Some of the students in my school do not attend class on certain days because you realise that socially they are connected to their families who are also in the conflict, we want to protect our land and the others also want their protection so if their families are engaged in that conflict they are also indirectly engaged in it and they wouldn’t even come to school, so you realise that learning is not going on well as we expected”. (*Nkonya teacher interview*)

“...education for one has suffered a lot due to the conflict, because we have to educate our children, they have to go to school if I didn’t get the chance to go to school and my English is not proper, at least my child should be able to go to school to teach me, to cater for me but here lies the case whereby they’ll be in the classroom and they will hear noise of chanting and all that which will disturb their academics and they wouldn’t fully concentrate on it. Then the youth among the school children, some of them may even join in the fighting which will go a long way to affect us”. (*Another Nkonya farmer interview*)

“My son you see to be honest when we were born into this community there are many, many of us who could have gone to school like everybody else’s son in other communities like our village and may be by now you would have seen me with other profession but because of this regular conflict we usually encounter, it disrupts a lot of activities within the community. For instance sometimes you realised that schools have to be closed because may be Nkonya people have come to the village and may be are causing problems and parents wouldn’t actually allow their wards to go sit in classrooms with conflicts all around, so it has actually affected education as the first thing, in that as they say education is the bedrock of every community especially the youth who are now growing up but there are a lot of them in the community who have actually not been able to progress in education as and when the conflict erupt.” (*Alavanyo elder interview*)

Some of the participants bemoaned the prolonged nature of the conflict which sometimes leads to destruction of school buildings as contributing to the damage in the educational system.

According to a trader from Alavanyo, for her children to catch up with the academic syllabus, she often sends them to her relatives in the cities in times of the conflict. She posits:

“It is not helping at all. When it occurs like that our children have to stay home, ourselves we stay home. We don’t go anywhere. The education of our children is just lacking behind compared to the kids of our friends in the cities, how they do well and all that. So me when it happen like that, I send them to my nieces and nephews in the city for them to get some studies going on because you don’t know when the schools will reopen. Education is key in this era”.
(*Alavanyo trader interview*)

“Sometimes they don’t go to school because they can attack them and it affects their academic work. And sometimes they don’t get peace of mind to learn and sometimes the schools are closed down and the schools are sometimes burnt. And even people’s homes get destroyed, is a serious thing that goes on”. (*Nkonya trader interview*)

It is evident from the above extracts that participants really consider the educational system in the two communities to be affected detrimentally by the Nkonya-Alavanyo conflict. Indeed, they are of the view that the lack of developmental projects in the communities is connected to the conflict.

4.4.1.2 Prohibition of intermarriages

This sub-theme represents participant accounts that reveal those in the two communities are prevented directly and indirectly from marrying among themselves. The majority of the participants indicated that marriage among the people of Nkonya and Alavanyo is impossible to the extent that the conflict remains. An Nkonya farmer speaks on the issue of intermarriage:

“...you can marry any man, but woe unto you if somebody...the person you are talking about is an enemy because I will not even take the bride price in the first place. My junior brothers or my senior brothers will even, you know, fight me if they hear that I’m taking a bride price from an enemy. Our people say that you don’t eat in the same bowl with your enemies. So in the first place, I won’t even just accept a bride price because of the conflicts.... I will not do that, none of

my daughters will marry any of..., and I'm sure none of their fathers will also accept something from my sons". (*Nkonya farmer interview*)

The above comment demonstrates clearly that the conflict between the people of Nkonya and Alavanyo has created enmity; thereby leading to the prohibition of intermarriages. This view was shared by the majority of the participants from both communities. The following statement stresses this point:

"... It wouldn't happen; I don't think any correct elder/father in this community will agree to give away his daughter or son to go and marriage somebody from our rival community, No, I wouldn't even think about it ever occurring". (*Alavanyo elder interview*)

"The people are our enemies so no inter-marriage. As for that one no, although inter-marriage can help. Somebody from the other side can marry one of us and then we live happily ever after because the person is from a different background and you are also from a different background, you can interact and make progress but in this case no. Enemies, probably enemies forever so no intermarriages". (*Alavanyo trader interview*)

"...intermarriages can never happen. Your parents wouldn't allow, your siblings wouldn't allow. You'll be a laughing stock in the community if you do so and the chiefs will ban you and the banishment alone wouldn't to go and marry a very pretty woman from Alavanyo, because some are there. There are beautiful girls there. You see them there all around but we also have equally prettier woman here and handsome gentlemen. So it will never happen". (*Another Nkonya farmer interview*)

According to some of the participants, the only way two people from Nkonya and Alavanyo can marry is to move out of the communities and resides elsewhere in order not to incur the wrath of others. For example:

"Well, I have not gone through any official programme to see something of that nature. I'm sure that, what they call love if it goes to the extreme and they still want to love themselves and marry

they will have to, both sponsors have to travel and go far to go and do their own thing without the support of each of the sides because even me I won't go, how much more the other side, so probably there is a chance of this going on outside but not in our land or even their". (*Nkonya farmer interview*)

...for example intermarriages, nobody will want to go out there and get an Alavanyo person to get married to. But the Rapport between the Nkonya and the Alavanyo people is not good at all so socially we don't have extensive communication with other people outside Nkonya. You can move out of the village to another place to marry an Alavanyo person but it is not good". (*Assemblyman, Nkonya*)

4.4.1.3 Destruction of cherished properties

Besides a disrupted educational system and the prohibition of intermarriage among the people Nkonya and Alavanyo, participants indicated the destruction of property as another consequence of the conflict. One teacher resident in Nkonya commented:

"Since this conflict began, it has caused a lot of loss concerning human resource, also you realise that there is a lot of looting, causing bush fires, people raid homes and camps and it has really caused a lot of loss relating to properties". (*Nkonya Teacher*)

"...houses and other things are damage. Your foodstuffs will be there and they will come and take chunk of it. Meanwhile it is money that you have invested in getting your crops to be able to sell and make some money. In this case when it happens like that, you can't even send your goods to the big cities and they will get rotten". (*Alavanyo Trader*)

"...the conflict end up in destruction of properties, people's lives and all that is going to be something that is not good for any community. So some people are rendered homeless because of the conflict. Their houses get destroyed". (*Alavanyo Student*)

From the above statements, it appears that, during the conflict, opposing communities adopt strategies that tend to target residents' cherished properties with the aim of disorienting and

weakening the opponent. Consequently, many residents from both communities are rendered homeless and impoverished.

In summary, the three sub-themes that measure the social impact of the Nkonya-Alavanyo conflict are disrupted educational system, prohibition of intermarriages and destruction to cherished properties. These problems are more likely to be addressed if the conflict is brought to a lasting end.

4.4.2 Economic Impact of the Conflict

Participants in the study commented that their economic lives have also been affected by the protracted conflict between Nkonya and Alavanyo. All economic activities virtually halt during the conflict, causing many to lose their investments; especially in the production of farm produce. Two main sub-themes emerged; namely, unemployment and high cost of living.

4.4.2.1 Unemployment

Unemployment as a sub-theme of the economic impact of the Nkonya-Alavanyo conflict refers to the loss of jobs especially among the youth in the two communities. The majority of the participants indicated that their jobs have been affected and they have been rendered redundant by the conflict. Some participants stated that the high unemployment rates among the youth can be attributed to the breakdown of the educational system. This has affected their employability in white-collar jobs. These are what some of the residents from the two communities had to say on this issue:

“...there is unemployment issue especially with regards to white collar jobs. You know white-collar jobs demand certificates, demands higher educational achievements and unless of course your parents take you far but if u wants to be in this particular community, you don’t even have the peace of mind of study. So I told you basically due to the conflict, learning, teaching and all those things are being retrogressed, so because people will not even graduate in the first place, come out with good certificate and all that, with regards to white collar jobs our people don’t get”. (*Nkonya farmer interview*)

“...our people are unemployed. Actually you’ll realise that as I said earlier, if you don’t go to school nowadays it’s very difficult to get job around, so many of the you like I said earlier, their education have been struggling due to this conflict and they have not come out very well so as a result many of them though they are capable and strong but they don’t have the educational backing to be able to get into any good job so some few of them actually engage in farming”.
(*Alavanyo elder interview*)

“There’s unemployment problem here. Lot of people, as I said won’t go to work so the insecurity there is causing a lot of people to just stay back home and do nothing and improve the lives of their children and so on and so forth. So nobody is able to go to work in that situation because of the conflict in general”. (*Nkonya assemblyman interview*)

“You can talk about unemployment, because when this conflict happens people’s farmlands are destroyed or taken over so they quit going to the farm. We don’t even go to school, and that is our source of livelihood, that is where we can earn our meats from so if the conflict come, our farmlands will be damaged ...which would also go a long way to affect us because money wouldn’t be there”. (*Alavanyo concerned citizen interview*)

“...a lot of people are unemployed around here. It is because of the insecurity that’s why, because nobody wants to put themselves at a place where they can get injured. That’s it, so people prefer to stay at home where they’ll be safe than to go out and get injured”. (*Nkonya trader interview*)

“We do have high rates of unemployment because as a result of this conflict you see, they practically lose their jobs. Most of us are farmers and when it happens like that you don’t go to the farm you just wonder about”. (*Alavanyo trader interview*)

From the above interview data, it is evident that many people in the two communities have virtually no means of earning a living. The majority of respondents attribute this to insecurity, lack of secondary and tertiary education, in addition to the physical destruction of farms by their opponents during the conflict

4.4.2.2 High cost of living

Apart from the high unemployment levels in Nkonya and Alavanyo, there is also a high cost of living as part of the economic impact of the conflict. The majority of participants are of the view that things are expensive in the two communities; not because they are unable to produce enough food to feed the people, but because most of the farm crops have been destroyed during the conflict. Besides, carrying farm produce to the market during periods of violent activity is a risky venture; therefore, those who are able to transport their products to market tend to sell them at very high prices. The following statements were made by the participants.

“...there’s high cost of living around. It’s because the conflict results in economic down....it just reduces economic activities and therefore we are unable to sell so when it’s over and the very little you have to sell you just increase the prices so at least you make your profits too as well. You see”. (*Alavanyo trader interview*)

“Looking at the range of things right now, the cost of living here is high. This is because the crops get destroyed and just a few ends up in the market. And I don’t know if you’ve heard, I actually have a son whose farm has completely been burnt down. It was almost harvest time when the farm was burnt down and up till now he has not been able to pay back the small, small loans he took to put into this farm and the family has been helped by the chiefs and other concern citizens, and this is an example of what it is like to live in this community. (*Alavanyo elder interview*)

“...especially during the conflict, because you wouldn’t get many goods in the market and the few ones that are there are being hyped by the seller because she/he doesn’t have any competitor, so they raise the prices and you can’t talk and just buy and get home...the risk in carrying your produce to the market, those things are also factors getting into the pricing, because everyone is afraid but if you’re lucky and get your produce to the market, God blessed you”. (*Nkonya, teacher interview*)

Thus far, the analysis of the interview data has shown that the Nkonya-Alavanyo conflict has resulted in unemployment, especially among the youth, and high cost of living in the two communities. These issues have had a deleterious impact on the economic lives of the people and, if not properly addressed, could give rise to undesirable social vices.

4.4.3 Psychological Impact of the Conflict

Psychological impact also emerged during the analysis of the data as a main theme, and was found to be a major consequence of the Nkonya-Alavanyo conflict. It is evident that protracted ethnic conflicts usually hold social dimensions, although the reality of ethnicity, in isolation, does not generate conflict. The psychological impact of the conflict refers to the state of mind of individuals during conflict and the fear that emanates as a result. It should be noted that the conflict has generated fear among the local indigenes, as indicated by the respondent. For example, when the land was first given to the Alavanyo people, they were all living peacefully until the conflict arose as a result of the realization of the territory's economic value. Therefore, fear can be seen as the effect of increased conflict over land, rather than the main cause. The main sub-themes that fall under this theme are a sense of insecurity and perceived enemies.

4.4.3.1 Sense of insecurity

The sense of insecurity refers to the fear and panic entertained by residents in the two communities due to the conflict. The majority of participants indicated the existence of a sense of insecurity among all members of the community. A farmer from Nkonya, who happens to be a town elder, stated that the conflict tends to restrict mobility in town because of the fear of being attacked by an adversary. Other respondents from Nkonya and Alavanyo share this view.

“We do admit even as elders of this community that even the fear and panic alone that it brings to our people, somebody even going out on a very good day to even go find his own food to eat on his own farm during the period whereby we are fighting and all that, like I said people out of fear and panic will not even go out. So I mean you understand the consequences themselves, somebody has to go to the farm, bring food and come and eat himself and with his family and children but because of fear he will not go out”. (*Nkonya elder interview*)

“Insecurity that is what we are talking about. Because during this era I mean people are injured, people die and all that. And then other consequences, of course nobody will go to work even to find his own income for the day. People will not go for school, teachers because of insecurity will not go to the classroom to go and teach, how much more student carrying their books to the place. So of course we are talking about some of the consequences of conflicts such as this, the insecurity and as a result of that no schooling, no farming, no work and all that and even the loss of valuable goods and life”. (*Nkonya farmer interview*)

“After the conflict there is not much insecurity but it affects a lot of people, you know during the conflict what they went through, the losses that they went through so they had this kind of...some people give dividend of security for quiet sometime but some people also find it easy to live until another conflict erupts”. (*Nkonya assemblyman interview*)

“I wouldn’t say that I am safe because in the evenings at times you hear a whole lot of noises and you are wondering what is happening, you are afraid to get out of your house and you are even afraid staying in because the worst can happen anytime”. (*Alavanyo teacher interview*)

The participants acknowledge that there is a police, and sometimes military, presence during and after the conflict in order to restore calm and maintain order. However, the police visibility does not diminish the fear and panic inherent in the community members. The assemblyman from Nkonya submits:

“...the police are doing their job but there is still that fear of any conflict erupting. Someone going to the farm and getting hurt or getting attacked so it’s all part of it. So it is like the police are there but sometimes before they get there the harm has been done already”. (*Nkonya assemblyman interview*)

“...we have had the police here but still safety. We have even had instances where the Military have been here to forestall safety, the government had sent delegations including Ministers and even recently the Volta Regional House of Chiefs issued a statement to the people of Alavanyo and Nkonya to forestall peace but still didn’t solve issues”. (*Nkonya teacher interview*)

“Our women, our daughters, our sons and our children always walk around in fear even if your weeding, you are afraid that something will just happen any fight will occur somewhere and that is all. Your wife and children may lose their lives, so psychologically we are not safe. But we’ve been in the system so we are just praying and hoping that God and the gods will protect us”. (*Alavanyo concerned citizen*).

It can be seen in the above statements that there exists a real sense of insecurity among the residents, due to unresolved conflict. This leads to constant fear and panic, which can affect their social interactions. The majority of participants indicated that the sense of insecurity tends to occur during and after periods of conflict. The following comments illustrate this point.

“It happens during the conflict, after the conflict and anytime because you know that the conflict is not going to end any sooner from now so we are living in a sense of insecurity and we are trying to protect ourselves by any means possible”. (*Nkonya teacher interview*)

“We are a little bit insecure after the conflict because by then tempers are very high and we experience some one or two killings on the farms and if you happen to be a victim and for that you definitely feel the sense of insecurity is great and then during the conflict too as well, you realise that once or twice the Nkonya people might cross over the border and attack few bunch of our people, so we feel the sense of insecurity during conflict, and then soon after but when the situation settle down then everything goes back to normal”. (*Alavanyo elder interview*)

“From my point of view it’s both after and during the conflict, because during the conflict you can’t move out and after the conflict a little noise or sound then you see people with their bag and are always under pressure...it’s not safe, because nobody tells you when they’re coming, you never know you can be walking around and you might just get shot. It happens a lot. We are not safe but our men too are trying very hard, they’re always ready to fight”. (*Alavanyo student interview*)

4.4.3.2 Perceived Enemies

Another psychological consequence that emerged from the interviews involves the perception of an enemy, which is shared by the people of both Nkonya and Alavanyo. The majority of participants responded that, since their opponents have decided to take what does not belong to them, they cannot be seen as friends or allies. They prefer to avoid any contact with their counterparts. The comments below emphasize this point.

“Now I see the Alavanyo people as enemies! They’re ingrates, very ungrateful to us. If you ask me, I am sorry to say that we don’t see them as humans... I will have nothing to do with an Alavanyo person, I will have nothing to do with them, so and this perception runs through my bloods... Anybody that is begotten out of me has it; of course you know issues of socialization and all that, we dare our children even as they are even growing”. (*Nkonya farmer interview*)

“They are bad. They are humans ...but for what I have heard and seen, the people of Alavanyo are bad. This is because they are ungrateful. You’ve come to me and I gave you a land and when I want to come and take palm tree from”. (*Nkonya teacher interview*)

“To be honest I will want to say that people who want to take away your land from you whom you know don’t belong to them, you should see them as your enemies so I wouldn’t even think of them as friends. If they were friends by now the land would have been given to us but they are our enemies and it’s the reason I told you my daughter or someone’s in this village will not go and marry there or bring lady to this village to marry”. (*Alavanyo elder interview*)

“...my perception about those people is they’re selfish because you are in need of land and someone decides to help you and now you want to take the land which is not yours. So I think they are very selfish and I don’t want to have anything to do with the people of Nkonya. Because that’s just the way they are, they’re not peaceful. So I see them as enemies”. (*Alavanyo trader interview*)

The above comments demonstrate clearly that the Nkonya-Alavanyo conflict has affected negatively the social, economic and psychological lives of the people. Therefore, we can

conclude that the lives and living conditions of the people within the two communities would undoubtedly be enhanced if the conflict stops. Conversely, the lives and developmental needs of the people may not be met if the conflict continues to linger.

Chapter Five

Discussion of Findings

This chapter discusses thoroughly the empirical findings of this study and relates these to existing literature, as well as outlining the implications of the findings. The chapter will also highlight recommendations to bring a lasting peaceful coexistence between the Nkonya and Alavanyo communities, and conclude with the limitations of this study and recommendations for future research.

5.1 Traditional Heritage and Economic Value of Land as a Cause of Conflict

The findings are indicative of the fact that the conflict has persisted due to the beliefs and perception of the land in dispute as a traditional heritage and having good economic value. The results show that traditional heritage is one major cause for this conflict. The Nkonya community who are true owners of the disputed land as evident in the finding holds the view that the parcel of land is sacred and has been passed on from ancestors to the current generation, hence must be safeguarded diligently. While cultural heritage has diverse meaning or can be explained in several ways, the parcel of land is regarded as heritage that requires protection on order to serve the needs of future generations. This finding is consistent with the literature. For example, the traditional heritage as a cause of the conflict is consistent with the Symbolic Politics Theory, which asserts that the justification for ethnic conflict or war is a result of people's response and acceptance of ethnic traditional/myth-symbols. These provide adequate and reasonable grounds for aggression towards another group (Kaufman, 2001).

The main argument espoused by this theory is that people accept ethnic traditional or myth-symbols that provide sufficient grounds for violence and further opportunity to engage in violence. In addition, this antagonism breeds fear of ethnic extinction, whereby one ethnic group tries to dominate the other, as a result of mobilizing resources from such symbols. These

symbolic myths provide grounds for antagonism if they can demonstrate that the other group is a traditional enemy and also if they are linked to assets of a group such as a territory, which needs defense protection and domination. The fear of ethnic extinction posited by this theory plays a critical role in explaining the cause of the Nkonya-Alavanyo conflict and it is evidenced in the entrenched position taken by each community. The conflicting communities believe that giving away the land so easily will erase their true identity, traditions or culture. Therefore, the parcel of land handed to them by their forefathers ought to be protected, while preserving their traditions and customs.

With the Nkonya-Alavanyo conflict, the land has become a symbolic myth in which each community perceives the other as an enemy capable of threatening its existence should any one of them become the bona fide owner of the land in dispute. Most of the people living in the two communities are subsistence farmers; hence, losing the land to any one community will threaten the survival of the other. The opportunities that the land serves to provide have led to the violence between these communities and both parties have taken an entrenched position as to the rightful owner of the parcel of land. Each community holds the view that when the land is given to the other, enough resources could be mobilized to threaten the other and exert dominance over their activities; thus, one becoming superior to the other, or vice versa. Access to land provides the means for territorial or boundary expansion and with the disputed land been regarded as sacred when secured will inure to the benefit of each community when they take possession of the land and in effect can result in marginalization of other group.

It is noteworthy that, the symbolic political theory alone in analyzing this conflict base on the findings cannot be the explanatory factor necessitating this conflict. This is because this theory considers only cultural aspects in explaining the cause of conflicts. Conversely, the findings highlight the other factors causing this lengthy conflict. Therefore, the symbolic politics theory is short of other reasons, such as the economic value of the land, which will be based on the Instrumentalist Theory in analyzing this conflict.

Another explanatory cause of this conflict arises from the economic prospect driven by the realization of the economic value that the land provides for the communities. In analyzing this

cause, the Instrumentalist Theory provides greater understanding of the issues arising from the findings. As indicated above, the findings reveal that both communities are unwilling to relinquish the land, as explained by the respondents; however, there is agreement among participants that the people of Nkonya are the original landowners. This finding is consistent with the literature discussed in Chapter 2. The main thrust of the Instrumentalist Theory holds that ethnic groups should be seen as material interest groups in cultural clothing, rent seekers who always maximize their material benefits for group members or pursue their parochial interest (Adu-Amankwaah, 2008).

Therefore, the Instrumentalist Theory holds that ethnicity is seen as mobilizing resources in order to influence the political process in order to allocate resources to themselves and their members. In essence, both communities have material interest in the land as result of its rich resources. It should be noted that both communities are able to mobilize its people in order to fight for the possession of the land due to the economic resources present in order to allocate such goods to themselves and the wider community members. It noteworthy that any of the conflicting community who gain leverage over the land serves to benefit enormously because the disputed land is seen to be a rich forest reserves, natural resources and fertile for agricultural purposes. Since most of the communities members are engaged in farming activities, both sides are unwilling to give up in taken possession of the land. Therefore, the continuous violence affects the political and administrative order of the communities; thereby affecting the developments of the communities.

However, the instrumentalist falls short of explaining the main issues arising form of this conflict because this theory considers the economic aspect since the theory only looks at the material interest or benefits obtained in the name of ethnicity and at the disadvantage of others. Therefore, in analyzing the main cause of this decade conflict, the two theories help explain and better understand the issues emerging from this conflict.

5.2 Impact of Nkonya-Alavanyo Conflict on the People

The analysis revealed that, generally, the Nkonya-Alavanyo has impacted negatively on the lives of people within these communities. From the results, the conflict has been detrimental to the economic, social and psychological lives of people living in Nkonya and Alavanyo, as discussed below.

5.2.1 Economic Impact of Conflict

As observed in the results, land conflict affects every aspect of the economy of people living in the affected areas. The dispute affects agricultural activities, which is the main occupation of the Nkonya and Alavanyo people. In times of conflict, there is disruption to agricultural activity because people are scared of going to their farms, farmlands are destroyed and looted, and transportation networks to and from markets are also precarious. The consequences resulting from the disruption of agricultural activities during times of conflict is devastating and threatens the livelihood and purchasing power of people in Nkonya and Alavanyo. This has led to unemployment among the communities since the majority are farmers and traders. Already there is a high deficit in white-collar jobs; many are engaged in trading and when conflict of this nature erupt, curfews are implemented on such communities which in the end affect trading activities; thereby driving up transaction costs and affecting standard of living. This is evident in the literature, when John (2010) asserts that impacts of conflicts leads to significant economic stagnation and production losses leading to hunger and poverty with an over-reliance on food aid.

In addition, in the study carried out by the UNEP (2006) highlights that increasingly violent conflicts also result in restricting the local population's access to markets, which significantly drives up the cost of living. In essence, the revenue required for infrastructural projects is affected significantly as a result of continuous conflict, which does not inure to both the communities at large and the country. As noted by Boone (2012), the impact of conflict cannot be felt only at the local level; regional and national level are also affected in the sense that ethnic conflict such as Nkonya-Alavanyo conflict also impacts at the macro-level. Resources are greatly

affected in the sense that more revenues that could have been channeled for other purpose are used for the deployment of security personnel to ensure the restoration of law and order.

In addition, the insecurity associated with the Nkonya and Alavanyo communities during periods of conflict have made it unattractive and viable for new businesses or businesses already operating as result leading to massive unemployment in these communities. Moreover, because of the disruption of viable economic activities during conflicts, the people in these communities are plagued with a high cost of living because there only few products or food stuffs available on sale; hence they are sold at high prices. These findings are consistent with the findings in the literature. For example, Justino (2007, p.6) asserts that “violent conflict will affect the levels of poverty in any given economy, as well as the dynamics of poverty along the lifetime of the conflict and in post-conflict context”. Justino (2007, p.7) has again observed that “violent conflicts result in the destruction of houses, land, labour, utensils, cattle and livestock”. Also, the literature suggest that violent conflict retards development of communities involved (Cramer, 2006; Kuzuhide, 2006).

It is important to note that the economic effects resulting from the Nkonya-Alavanyo conflict as well as other ethnic conflicts in Ghana are limited not only to the people of Nkonya and Alavanyo, but also the nation. The conflict stifles much needed revenue that would have been accrued as a result of the taxation of economic activities in the Nkonya and Alavanyo communities. The State also spends its scarce resources on the purchases of ammunition and the provision of security for lives and properties in these communities and the continuity of such expenditures by the state will drain the economic power of Ghana and further weaken its already weak economic power. As noted by Shinta (2009), the economic impacts of conflicts entail a reduced state capacity that is linked to a lessening revenue base, in addition to significant economic stagnation, as well as decreased public spending that is attributable to disinvestment, plummeting exports, depreciating exchange rates, hyper-inflation, as well as capital flight. These economic impacts are seldom limited to the nation of conflict. It follows that, nations that border conflict zones might require to enhance security spending in military, as well as in non-military segments. In addition, such nations might incur new expenditure in regard to refugees, as well as losses that emanate from weakening regional trade.

5.2.2 Social Impact of Conflict

As revealed by the results, the conflict also affects the social life of the people living in Nkonya and Alavanyo. As noted by UNEP (2006), armed conflict such as the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict, has a propensity to bear a multiplicity of long and short-term impacts on social development, as well as on human and environmental well-being. The recurring nature of the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict leads to gun battles, robberies, lootings and arsons and this disrupts the social interaction and the development of people.

In every conflict zone, the impact of violence on education cannot be underestimated. Various researches have shown that education plays an important role in every society for the development of its human capital. Society is of the view that the more educated people are, the better the needs of people are served which inure to the benefit of all simply because they are able to develop and served the needs of the societies based on the knowledge acquired. The findings demonstrate that the conflict affect the education of the future leaders of the Nkonya and Alavanyo communities, since most often the educational calendars of this communities are interrupted. Not only has education in the community been interrupted, but the conflict has led to the destruction of educational facilities and the fear of the teaching community is greatly affected because teachers refuse posting to these communities as a result of fear for their lives and properties. As noted in the UNECSO (2010) report, community schools are closed during periods of conflict, there are high deficit in teacher-student ratio because of teacher absenteeism, insecurity among children commuting to school or class attendance and this affects the development of people because education is seen as bedrock in the development of every society or country. This finding agrees with Justino's (2007) assertion that education is crucial in alleviating household poverty but is affected by conflict.

The results further revealed that it is difficult to find marriages between an individual from Nkonya and an individual from Alavanyo. Inter-marriages between these communities rarely happen as a result of the conflicts because the conflicting parties see themselves as enemies. Though sociologists posit that inter marriages and ethnic identity are important when it comes to community interactions and cultural development, the findings shows that, inter-marriages are

strongly prohibited and one group doesn't want to be seen or identify with the other groups. As noted by Furtado & Trejo (2012), inter-marriages can affect and erase their true identity; therefore, conflicting parties taken entrenched positions that ultimately affect their way of life. Conversely, inter-marriages may serve as a panacea for peace, as they would regard themselves as one people seeking a common goal for the development of their communities.

Furthermore, the conflict confines people to their homes and this stagnates social interactions and communal meetings such as festivals which is core to the heritage of these communities. This is because people are scared of losing their lives or being attacked; hence. They perceive that being grounded at their homes to some extent will guarantee their safety. Moreover, properties worth millions of Ghana cedis are consistently lost during the conflicts. These include individual properties such as homes and shops, as well as government properties such as bungalows and schools among others. When homes and properties are destroyed, people become internally displaced within their own community and it places a lot of burden on the government to provide shelter; therefore, resources that could have been used for other developmental purposes are used for different purpose leaving the communities behind in terms of infrastructural development. As stated earlier, people are grounded to their homes anytime this conflict erupts hence are unable to access social facilities such as schools, entertainment centers and hospitals among others just because of the fear of exposing one's self to danger.

The peace and stability of Ghana is constantly threatened as a result of ethnic conflicts. The constant occurrence of ethnic conflicts leaves a lot of people homeless, destitute, landless, abused, and injured. Tsikata and Seini (2004) reports that there exists perennial communal conflicts among different communities in Ghana, and these conflicts occasionally explode into violent conflicts which leads to loss of lives and properties. A CDD-Ghana (2003) research report indicates about 54% of Ghanaians maintained that violent conflicts between communities occur "sometimes", "often" or "always". The constant occurrence of communal conflicts in Ghana has the tendency to put the whole country in flames someday. The recurring nature of conflicts in Ghana drives people to think that the state is no longer capable of safeguarding their lives and properties. The state risk losing credibility and statehood status once people lose trust in the state's ability to protect them. According to Onoma (2009), ethnic conflicts contribute

significantly towards the collapse of social cohesion, as well as the impediment of local governance structures. This in turn might lead to the inaccessibility of the standard safety nets. In this regard, the escalating economic and social vulnerability, attributable to ethnic conflict, might in the context of land and environmental degradation, generate new tensions, as well as conflict over vital resources; for example, water or food affecting the stability and peace of a country.

5.2.3 Psychological impact of conflict

The Nkonya-Alavanyo conflict, as revealed by the results, indicates the psychology of people in the area is affected negatively. The conflict with its devastating consequences breeds a sense of insecurity capable of affecting the psychological wellbeing of people. The constant fear of being attacked can be stressful as well as drive people into a state of anxiety characterized by fear. Furthermore, the results revealed that the conflict as lead to the perception of an enemy shared among the people of Nkonya and Alavanyo regarding each other.

Nyamu-Musembi (2006) argues that identities related to ethnicity make up component of the psychological process that initiates the development of psycho-cultural dispositions that encourage groups to engage in antagonistic and violent interactions. In this context, is worthy to note that, identity is a characteristic of the emotional, as well as psychological formation of individuals, equally, attached to the maintenance of individual security, as well as integrity, and might be extraordinarily opposed to change. It is from this perspective that the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict is essentially is driven by identity. In such a conflict, the fear of destruction and the future are overriding factors, since they hold the same basic factors, which is the fear of losing one's identity. In regard to perceived enemies, when two communities such as the Alavanyo-Nkonya are in conflict, it follows that psychological bigotry operates in driving the groups apart, as well as preventing efforts geared towards reconciliation. In essence, the fear between communities has provided the breeding grounds for insecurity because they perceived each other as enemies that cannot be tolerated therefore affecting the needs for peaceful and lasting solution that ought to be finding in ending this conflict.

According to Maoz and McCauley (2008), members of communities in conflict have a predisposition to identify the perceived enemy as irrational and narrow-minded, hostile and self-

centered, and as a result undeserving of accommodating gestures. The notion that the other group can only understand the language of bloodshed, and that consequences ought to be zero-sum, implying that their loss is to our benefit,' can result in approving, tolerating, or even perpetrating violent behaviour against members of the other community and this is detrimental to Ghana's peace and stability. Such a mind-set would be unimaginable outside the background of ethnic conflict. This implies that, if empathy entails the predisposition to feel distressed by another person's adversity, and to feel inspired to ease their affliction, then cultural conflict normally causes empathy to be unsuccessful.

Volkan (2006) opines that prolonged conflicts, such as the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflicts in Ghana, could transpire as an upshot of discrimination against or dispossession of a particular group of their fundamental human needs on the grounds of their communal identity. From this perspective, recognition, as well as the safeguarding of identity, is a major facet of these fundamental human needs. Identity entails psychological self-conception, where the self identifies with explicit social, as well as cultural attributes. This serves as a linkage connecting a particular group or a category of persons, and distinguishes simultaneously one group of persons from another. From the description of ethnicity it is apparent that ethnicity entails a unique structure of identification, where a people's cultural traditions, as well as history are emphasized. It also borders on the affection and perception that people from the opposing communities have for themselves. The main sub-themes from the results such fear of insecurity and perceived enemies shows that the conflict has greatly affected the psychological disposition of the conflicting parties which plays a role in finding a lasting solution to the conflict. The need for more counselling and education in tolerating each other's views that they are not enemies can provide some leverage in seeking peace between the conflicting communities.

5.3 Recommendations Based on the Findings

As seen in the results, the Nkonya-Alavanyo conflict is deeply rooted in the daily lives of the Nkonya and Alavanyo people. If left unchecked or unresolved, the conflict could extend beyond the communal borders of Alavanyo and Nkonya; thereby infiltrating the stability and peace in other communities and Ghana as a whole. In light of the findings, the following

recommendations are proposed to contain and resolve this conflict so that people living in these communities can go about their daily activities without fear of violent attack:

- An equal division by government in collaboration with traditional authorities of the land so each of the feuding faction now has a fair parcel of the disputed land as a community bona fide property. As noted from the results, the conflict dates back to history and the damage to lives and properties as a result of this conflict makes the quest for the rightful owner of the land in dispute relatively irrelevant. To forestall peace, stability and development going forward, the land should be fairly shared with proper demarcations so each community knows what portion of the land belongs to them.
- The feuding factions must constantly display tolerance and understanding in times of overt and covert aggression from one another by resulting to dialogue rather than war.
- Both communities must make concessions and compromises going forward and do away with the 'our community is right' attitude.
- Going forward, the government must demonstrate true commitment to resolving the conflict by being trustworthy and refraining from capitalizing on the ethnic sentiments in order to secure electoral favors.
- Government or the state must start to enforce all resolutions and recommendations that have emerged from its own understanding of the conflict as well as punish new aggressors or initiators of the conflict since this can deter others from initiating the conflict. Government must also empower state institutions so like the National and Regional House of Chiefs, the Alternate Dispute Resolution Centre, the Police Service, District and Municipal Assemblies so they can deal with conflicts more proactively

5.4 Limitations of the study

For several reasons, the results of this research should be interpreted with caution. The reasons for this include; firstly, the use of the semi-structured interview as a data gathering technique relies on respondents being willing to give accurate and complete answers. The tendency for respondents to lie due to feelings of pride, insufficient knowledge on the topic area, anxiety, forgetfulness or uncertainty was reflective in the study, as some of the respondents were not consistent in their responses. Secondly, the generalizability of the findings is limited because the study focused on only a single case hence it is unable to account representatively how ethnic conflicts threatens Ghana's peace and stability. Finally, the reliance on community members for information, although resourceful, presented extreme views from the perspective of the two communities. These views may not necessarily be a true reflection of the true cause and impact of the conflict; hence, the study conclusions may be skewed.

5.5 Conclusion

The above study has demonstrated that the Nkonya-Alavanyo conflict has led to significant socio-economic regression in regard to development, devastated livelihoods and support structures in the Volta Region. Beyond institutional malfunction is the absence of political resolve to determine longstanding issues of injustice, which have continuously, over several decades in the Volta Region, emanated issues of sovereignty as well as control of land as a social and economic resource. With respect to the theoretical framework and literature, the results demonstrate further that the main cause of the ensuing conflict as a result of a land struggle between the two communities involved is not purely economic in nature. In addition, the land has important cultural value to both groups. Thus, in essence, the land in question has two important aspects in the lives of both communities and this is emanated from the economic values that the land serves to provide as well as the land serving as a cultural heritage, sense of belonging or continuity or identity. Therefore, an overlap of the cultural values and economic factors define the conflict and make it very difficult to resolve.

Recently, ethnic conflict has become a canker, eating deep into the fabric of Ghana's peace and stability. The constant reoccurrence of conflict has damaged both lives and properties and threatens the future development of Ghana. Therefore, it is imperative that Government makes trustworthy commitments to resolving these conflicts through mechanisms that will bring everlasting stability and peaceful coexistence. It is also important that communities engulfed in ethnic conflict exhibit a high sense of tolerance and appreciate the need to use dialogue, rather than violence, to resolve confrontations. Occasionally, conflict is inevitable, but communities and Government must be swift in anticipating the outbreak as well as adopting effective preventative measures. There is an urgent need to resolve the underlying concerns that fuel conflict, if the Ghanaian administration wants to uphold its reputation as a peaceful nation in an otherwise unstable sub-region.

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Appendix

Appendix 1: Interview Guide

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

NO.	QUESTIONS
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1.	Could you please tell me where you come from?
2.	What is your occupation as a member of this community?
3.	Can you please tell me about any noticeable position you hold in this town?
4.	There is this protracted conflict between the people of Alavanyo and Nkonya. Could you please tell me what you know about this conflict and why it keeps occurring?
5.	Can you please tell me how people of this town view people on the other side of the conflict? My focus really is on their perception.
6.	You mentioned that the conflict is a heritage from your forefathers. Could you please expatiate on that? What exactly do you mean by “heritage” sir/madam?
7.	Could you please comment on the impact of this conflict on the development of this community? My focus is on the social, economic and psychological consequences.
8.	Could you please share your thoughts on the possibility of finding a lasting solution to this conflict?